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The Week

WHEN Will Hays was on the witness stand before the Senate committee investigating the aftermath of the oil scandal, ten days ago, he admitted for the first time that Harry P. Sinclair's gift to the Republican deficit fund was $160,000, and not $75,000, as he had sworn in 1924. Through the persistence and skill of the committee, we now learn some of the details as to how this transaction was kept concealed from the public. Liberty bonds worth $25,000 were sent to James A. Patten, Chicago millionaire grain speculator, who consented to appear as a dummy "contributor" of this amount. Another consignment of bonds, worth $50,000, was given John T. Pratt, New York millionaire, though Mr. Pratt is understood to have subsequently given the committee an additional $50,000, thus making his "gift" valid. Mr. Hays invited Andrew W. Mellon and Senator Butler to perform the same service, but they were astute enough to refuse. A large part of the Liberty bonds involved in these operations came from the $3,000,000 of fictitious profits earned by the dummy corporation, the Continental Trading Company, Ltd., in the one transaction of its short life. Another part of these profits was the $230,000 bribe to Secretary Fall; and still another was the handsome payments, $750,000 and $800,000 respectively, made to the missing witnesses, Harry M. Blackmer and James E. O'Neil.

UP to Tuesday of this week, Hays had appeared twice before the Senate Committee, in 1924 and 1928. On neither occasion did he tell the whole truth. In 1924 he deliberately understated Sinclair's contribution by $85,000. In 1928, after assuring the committee that he was there to tell all he knew, he omitted the highly important facts about Patten, Butler and Mellon. Nobody knows what additional information he may be withholding still; and by his conduct Mr. Hays has completely destroyed whatever confidence the public may once have had in the value of his word. Only one degree less reprehensible is the conduct of the other leading Republicans involved in this affair. Not one of them has come forward voluntarily and told everything he knows. Not one of them has ever indicated any realization of the depths of moral degradation reached by the Ohio Gang and its friends. Here is Secretary Mellon, for example, who has kept silent for five years about important information affecting the honesty of the Republican National Committee. He utters not a syllable until his connection with the business is exposed through a memorandum written by the late Mr. Pratt. Then he writes a hasty letter to Senator Walsh reciting the facts which he knows can no longer be kept secret. Does Secretary Mellon regard this as the conduct of a good citizen? Is a keen sense of civic morality no longer compatible with conservatism in the Republican party?

THE situation in Nicaragua is fast becoming impossible. The unofficial war with Sandino drags on, being now in its seventh month. More than twenty American soldiers have been killed, and an unknown number of Nicaraguans, which the Marine officers estimate at several hundred. This whole situation, it should be remembered, has arisen since Colonel Stimson, acting as the direct representative of President Coolidge, made his famous agreement. The terms of that plan were that both Conservatives and Liberals should lay down their arms at once, that the United States should keep order

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until the election, and that the balloting should be supervised by us to insure fairness. True, Colonel Stimson said that any individual who refused to accept the conditions would be forcibly disarmed; but nothing like the present circumstances was contemplated. The Marines now offer two explanations of their campaign against Sandino, which are mutually incompatible: first, that he controls an insignificant amount of mountainous territory; and second, that it is impossible to hold a fair election unless he has been subjugated. They promise a speedy victory, but they have been doing that ever since early last autumn. Though, legally, only Congress can declare war, what we are doing in Nicaragua looks more like war every day.

IT WAS to be expected that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee would refuse, as it did the other day, to interfere in the matter; but no such inhibition lies upon President Coolidge and Secretary Kellogg. General Sandino has made public a statement of the terms on which he would make peace: withdrawal of the American forces, elimination of all presidential candidates who have already held high office, and an election whose honesty would be guaranteed by international Latin-American supervision. These terms are not so impossible that they could not be the basis for a discussion. And if agreement could not be had, we could still consider bottling up Sandino in his mountain fastness and conducting the election with that territory omitted. Is President Coolidge waiting for the situation to get as bad as possible before he again acts? If so, he will not need to wait very long.

THE Interstate Commerce Committee of the United States Senate is investigating conditions in the coal fields, and a sub-committee headed by Senator Gooding has recently visited western Pennsylvania and made a first-hand study of the situation in that region, where many thousands of miners have been on strike for almost a year. Its first report to the full committee has just been published, and confirms the statements which, when they have come from less authoritative sources, have been stigmatized as "sensational," "radical" and "unreliable." The sub-committee found a "reign of terror" in some parts of western Pennsylvania. It found strikers' families, evicted from company-owned houses through a federal injunction, living under conditions which, when warm weather comes, "will become breeders of disease and a menace to the whole community." It found newly-imported strike-breakers, many of them Negroes, living under even worse conditions, and comments with surprise upon the indifference to these conditions displayed by some of the mine-owners.

THE Coal and Iron Police, the private army of the mining companies, are strongly criticized. "Everywhere your committee visited they found victims of the Coal and Iron Police who had been beaten up and were still carrying scars on their faces and heads from the rough treatment they had received." The committee confirms the statements that policemen also fired shots into schoolrooms and miners' homes, interfered with strikers' calling at post offices for their mail, and prevented their assembling even for such seemingly innocuous purposes as singing hymns. The Senators report that they found a Communist organization at work furnishing relief to the strikers, and note with surprise that the mine-owners made no effort to prevent such activities. The only anti-communist efforts have come from the strikers themselves.

THE story the Senate committee tells is shocking enough; but it is only one chapter of the tragic tale of coal, and it will be futile to attempt to remedy these conditions without attacking the larger problem of which they are a part. Mining is a sick industry. The demand is being decreased by the use of substitutes, such as oil, gas and electric power. The coal fields are over-supplied with labor, so that strict efficiency would dictate the elimination of several hundred thousand men, for whom, however, no other employment is available. The costs of production vary from mine to mine so greatly that any reasonable basis of profit-making which might be set up would be sure to permit favored mines to profiteer, and force marginal ones to shut down. The industry is cursed with absentee ownership, and with a type of executive management which is peculiarly lacking in any sense of social responsibility. Mine and railroad ownership interlock until, as has been brought out in testimony before the Senate committee, it becomes possible for railroads to force down coal prices with the avowed intention of making it impossible to pay the wages stipulated in the Jacksonville agreement. These are problems which cannot be solved except by a broad consideration of all the factors involved, and through governmental action which would necessitate the acceptance of a greater degree of social responsibility than the present administration seems prepared for.

ONCE again and for the fourth successive time, the Norris amendment to the national Constitution has been defeated by the House. Heretofore it has been killed in committee; but this time it was permitted to get to the floor, where it was rejected 209 to 157. The amendment is designed to do away with "lame duck" Congresses. It would have the new President who is elected in November begin his term the following January, and the new House and Senate hold their first sessions in the same month. The short sessions which now end March 4 would be abolished, adjournment in every year being at the will of the Congress. This would prevent the present condition, under which members of the House and Senate who have been rejected at the polls continue to serve for a year. It would

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prevent the filibustering which in the final days of the short session makes it possible for a few men to prevent the passage of even the most urgently needed legislation. If there is any honest argument in favor of the present system as opposed to the new scheme provided by the Norris amendment, it has not been brought forward in the debate. The amendment has been defeated four times by potential "lame ducks" on behalf of their own kind. A man who has been defeated for reëlection, but remains in Congress for one more session, can demand of the administration that he "be taken care of" with a comfortable judicial or diplomatic appointment, and, if necessary, can make this the price of continuing to vote with the machine. This is not right; but it is politics, and 157 members of the House have indicated, by voting against the amendment, on which side their hearts lie. We should like to believe that the voters will rebuke them when next they come up for reëlection, but past experience offers little hope that this will be the case.

THE agitation for the reform provided in the Norris amendment has now gone on in one form or another for many years; and it is disheartening to reflect that a change so simple, so obviously desirable, can be blocked for so long by the actions of a small group of selfish legislators. The answer is that there is no great public demand for the amendment. It inspires no loyalties, gathers no army under its banner, as was the case with women's suffrage and with prohibition. Congress never passes important social legislation except under strong pressure from without; and this country is so large, so preoccupied with a multitude of matters, that it is next to impossible to bring such pressure to bear except when people's deepest prejudices are aroused. The only alternative is to send to Congress persons of such a caliber that they will act for the general good even when it is against their own personal and private interest to do so; and the prospect of getting a two-thirds majority of the House, composed of men and women of that type, at any time in the immediate future is not, we think our readers will agree, a very bright one.

MR. Magnus Alexander, president of the National Industrial Conference Board, stated to the Fortnightly Forum in New York the other night that the claim that mechanization of industry is responsible for unemployment is an unwarranted contention. Said Mr. Alexander: "As mechanization of industry with its requirement of fewer workers per unit of production decreases production costs and prices, the demand for commodities simultaneously increases and causes not only the theoretically released workers to be re-absorbed but in addition calls new workers into production." This is the kind of economics often indulged in by the poorly informed business man. He takes a "principle" from the classical economists, which was deduced from a set of assumed but non-existent conditions, vulgarizes it, leaves out the exceptions and the qualifications, and then pronounces it as if it were a law applying perfectly to present-day facts. The effect—and often the purpose—is to prove that nothing is wrong with the operation of industry under its existing management. Most real economists now would admit, on the basis of the evidence, that Mr. Alexander's "law" isn't working. They would question whether prices do fall as rapidly as mechanization of industry permits. They would doubt whether, even if prices did fall enough, the demand for any particular product or group of products were sufficiently elastic to absorb the additional amount which could be produced with full employment. They would wonder whether new industries always spring up fast enough to absorb the displaced workers, and whether, if so, displaced workers could be trained and transferred for new occupations without considerable delay. But such doubts might reveal a need for social measures against unemployment which Mr. Alexander's principles vehemently oppose. No wonder he ignores them.

SENATOR KING has introduced in the United States Senate a resolution dealing with Haiti. It calls for an investigation, by the Foreign Relations Committee, of the history of recent American relations with the island republic, and in justification of such an inquiry it recites a series of charges without vouching for their correctness. We summarize the more important of these:

> That the United States seized Haiti by force in 1915, and that in the subsequent resistance by the Haitians more than 2,500 of them have been killed.
>
> That the American admiral who was in charge took control of the government of Haiti, "interfered with the [next] election and exerted military pressure and all influences at his command to secure the election of Dartiguenave as President."
>
> That when the National Assembly refused to ratify a new convention giving the United States control of the revenues, police, public works and sanitary administration, the Admiral cut off the salaries of the opposing members and forced acceptance of the convention by announcing that the United States "has the intention to remain in Haiti until the desired end is accomplished."
>
> That in 1916 a new constitution, giving foreigners the right to own land in Haiti, heretofore prohibited, was prepared by the U. S. Navy Department and submitted to a newly elected National Assembly. That when the National Assembly rejected the new constitution, "the military forces of the United States summarily and forcibly dissolved the Assembly, took possession of the legislative chambers . . . and when the two branches of the Assembly met in other places they were summarily and forcibly dispersed by American military forces."
>
> That an election was ordered by the Americans for the purpose of having a "popular ratification" of the

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new constitution and "a few votes were cast under the supervision and control of military forces and under conditions that indicated pressure and intimidation of the Haitian people."

That after the dissolution of the National Assembly the President set up an appointive "Council of State" which was extra-constitutional and illegal, and "pretended to take over and exercise the legislative powers of the National Assembly" and has been "merely the instrument to register the will of the President of Haiti who has been and is controlled by the United States."

That in 1922 the Council of State "pretended to elect" as successor to Dartiguenave, Louis Borno, "although he is not eligible to the presidency because he is not the son of a Haitian citizen as prescribed by the Constitution."

That in 1926 the Council of State proceeded to reëlect Borno for another four years "with the approval and support of the military forces of the United States." That shortly before this "election," President Borno appointed as eighteen of the twenty-one members of the Council of State "his relatives, personal friends and retainers, in order that he might be assured of his reëlection."

That the convention of 1915 expired in 1926 and that "if the United States had any right, under convention, to occupy Haiti and control its government and the people of Haiti, such right no longer exists."

That through these conditions, including the recently adopted amendments to the constitution, "the liberties of the people are restricted, the freedom of the press destroyed, the independence of the courts interfered with, the voice of the people in the matter of levying taxes and expending them silenced, the right of franchise denied and the people of Haiti subjected to a foreign control which attempts to screen its power behind Haitian agencies." That "there will be no correction of these conditions and no restoration of civil government and constitutional authority in Haiti until the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate shall be elected by the people of Haiti, and shall, in turn, as an electoral body, elect the President of Haiti under the terms of the Haitian constitution." That "the suppression of civil authority by military power is contrary to the Constitution of the United States and those principles of political and civil liberty which are professed by the government and the people of the United States."

SENATOR KING phrases this indictment politely in the form of a series of allegations and invites the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to establish their truth or falsity. But he knows, of course, and everyone else knows, that they are true. They constitute only the admitted facts of our relations with Haiti during the past twelve years, with the omission of the excellent sanitary measures, the road-building, erection of schools and hospitals, and the suppression of banditry which we have put through —chiefly with Haitian money. It is unlikely that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will act on Senator King's resolution; and if it should do so, and once again go through the facts which have already been the subject of an exhaustive senatorial inquiry, it is unlikely that the administration will change its present policy. Nevertheless, it is a good thing to have a plain statement of our Haitian record such as that Senator King has written, made public. Perhaps after we have read it often enough, we may begin to feel some doubts about it.

Progressives in the Campaign

THE campaign for the presidential party nominations is running true to its earlier form. It continues its noncommittal and turbid course in an almost complete vacuum of positive ideas, conflicting policies and vital discussion. Powerful factions in their parties are fighting against the success of the two leading candidates, but in spite of the near approach of the primaries in many states, Messrs. Hoover and Smith are both steering clear of a frank individual appeal to the voters for support. They are behaving as if popular favor, which has to be won by direct personal solicitation and an explicit or implicit confidence in the intelligence of the party voters will cost more than it is worth. Their generalship eschews the noise and bloodshed of a battle, and does not depend for success upon the ardent coöperation and the intelligent interest of their followers. Their strategy implies that the victor will have maneuvered himself into an irresistible strategic position and that, in the end, a few men sitting around a table will register the ordained decision. They may be right, but they are taking as grave a risk by a strategy of maneuver as by a strategy of battle. The men who gather around this table of destiny will decide, if they can, that the maneuvers of the leading candidates have betrayed their weaknesses rather than their strength, the inference being that the ultimate committee is free to choose some comparatively obscure and accommodating candidate. If you sup with the devil you must fish with a long spoon.

Presumably neither Herbert Hoover nor Alfred Smith prefers to play this kind of politics. They would both like to ride to their nominations on a wave of popular support which they had rolled up by the magic of their messages and the allure of their personalities. They are not, however, sufficiently sure of themselves and their following to take the party into their confidence. They are both parvenus in national politics. Mr. Hoover has never before proposed himself as a candidate for any elective office, and it is wholly uncertain how Al Smith, popular as he is in New York, will, as an Irish Tammany Catholic, please or displease the different racial, religious and class groups in different parts of the country. During a period like the present of meaningless discord and uneasy hesitation in opinion, political initiative in any one direction is risky, and shrewd and cautious men naturally prefer to play it safe. Hoover and Smith are temperamentally men who would rather sit in on a

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game or direct a business than lead a cause or plant an idea in the popular mind. They are ignoring or using as little as is safe the opportunity for reaching the voters through the direct primary, on the theory, presumably, that it is harmful to party discipline to cultivate war psychology within the party.

In politics, as in other affairs of life, a leader of men cannot make for a first-rate result by employing second-rate processes. We agree with Senator Borah that a candidate who has no views upon public questions is unfit and that a candidate who has views and is afraid to state them is unsafe. If Hoover and Smith succeed by virtue of the methods which they are now using, their nominations will not add anything substantial to their personal independence and prestige. The motives which now induce them to conceal their attitudes toward controverted questions will operate almost as powerfully after the conventions as today. If they then assume definite positions on doubtful issues, they will, according to their counsellors, risk the loss of votes, and their counsellors will be right. As candidates for the nomination they will have increased the inertia of opinion by yielding to it, and they will have made it the more difficult for themselves subsequently to run counter to it. It would not be fair, however, to press too hard on this criticism. If they succeed in being nominated, they will have to appeal to the voters, irrespective somewhat of party, and this necessity may, if the voters show a manifest disposition to hesitate between them, in the end force them to take the voters into their confidence. The educational value of a contest between Hoover and Smith will depend chiefly on the volume of the skeptical vote and the tactics of Al Smith.

Supporters of Hoover and Smith have complained about the inconclusiveness of recent articles in the New Republic on the two leading candidates. But at this stage of the campaign it is not the function of a journal like the New Republic to pick favorites. Its editors are much more interested in doing a different job. They would like, if possible, to make sure that, no matter who is elected, the American voters will understand what they have decided and why. Both candidates are in certain respects good risks and in other respects poor risks. It is more important that both should be pressed to reveal what they really are and stand for than that either should be able to count on support as a reward of his past behavior. It is also more important that the American voters should circumspectly examine the comparative qualifications of the candidates than that they should jump quickly to a conclusion. The most serious danger which confronts the American people with respect to the election is that they may be betrayed into choosing a second Harding, or, if they have two good candidates to pick from, that they may be cajoled into selecting their favorite after a campaign in which they have been misinformed or cheated. Since the War, most elections have been won by cheating. The present Tory government of Great Britain fooled the British voters with the Zinovieff letter, but it won thereby a shoddy and undeserved victory, which falsified its relation to British public opinion. The Cabinet which took advantage of it has lacked authority and integrity and has not known how to use its power for the benefit of the British nation. President Coolidge's huge popular vote in 1924 was collected by a clever manipulation of the weaknesses of the Democrats and the Progressives, but his victory also was not the result of an intelligent and well informed choice by the American people. Whenever he tried to initiate a policy of his own, his own party has ignored him with impunity.

If the success of the coming election depends less upon the victory of any one candidate or party than upon the staging of a more educational discussion of vital issues, the course which an intelligent progressive ought to pursue is sufficiently obvious. He would have some reasons to prefer Hoover among the prominent Republican candidates and Smith among the prominent Democratic candidates, and if he has any influence in the councils of the two parties, he might use it in favor of the nomination of one or the other. The victory of Lowden or Dawes, the drafting of Coolidge or the selection of some amenable favorite son would all be equivalent to the triumph of relatively obscurantist tendencies in the Republican party and put an end to any vital discussion of issues. It seems clear also that the defeat of Smith would mean the rejection of the only Democrat who is capable of issuing a vigorous challenge to the Republicans. As between Hoover and Smith, if they are the nominees, the progressive has only to wait and watch. Neither of them has conducted his pre-convention campaign in a manner which entitles him to progressive support, but neither is, like Dawes, Curtis or Reed, hopelessly unregenerate. Notwithstanding the concessions which they are now making to the inertia of American public opinion, they would both be prepared, if they felt the presence among the voters of a large volume of hesitating opinion, to jump into a comparatively frank and instructive debate about public issues. Even without a candidate of their own, the progressives will occupy a strong strategic position. By insisting on cross-examining both candidates, they will adopt the course which is most likely at present to result in a fruitful election.

If he is opposed by Hoover, it will be the part of Al Smith to force the fighting. The educational value of the discussion for public opinion will depend very largely upon the edge and energy of Governor Smith's attack upon the Republican position. The case which he can build up against Republican plutocracy is strong, simple, obvious and coherent. It would, in fact, be irresistible, if the Democratic party which is supposed to support him were not itself at heart favorable to plutocracy. He can start with the fact of proved and widespread

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corruption on the part of responsible Republican politicians and business men. There were, no doubt, many more Republican politicians and business men who did not share in this corruption, but they usually acted in part as its accomplices. If they had not served as its accomplices and steadfastly refused to expose or repudiate it, it could not have assumed the monstrous shape that it did. In this sense, Mr. Hoover himself must share the responsibility for this corruption. He will, if nominated, be the candidate of a party which has betrayed the confidence of the American people and which superficially is unashamed of its record. This party has, moreover, expressly proclaimed itself as the one indispensable agent and guardian of the prosperity of the American people. It has advertised and glorified the high level of security and comfort which they have enjoyed during the past eight years and it has attributed their well-being to its own policy of stimulating productive activity and of stopping, so far as possible, any interference with business by government. This is the message and the claim which practically every public spokesman of the Republican party, with President Coolidge at their head, has repeated during the past six years on every appropriate or inappropriate occasion.

Apart from indicting them for corruption, it would be the chief business of Al Smith to ask Mr. Hoover to show cause why he and his party have not taken its assumed and well advertised responsibility for the popular welfare more seriously. There are flaws in this prosperity with which they have been unwilling or incompetent to deal. Ever since 1921, agriculture has suffered notoriously from unremunerative prices, and recently industrial unemployment has assumed large dimensions and is the cause of considerable popular privation and suffering. Governor Smith can point out how absurd it is for the Republicans to claim the credit for the prosperity and yet attribute the flaws in the prosperity to unmanageable economic processes. They have done nothing effective to help the American farmer through his period of adversity. They are now occupied with underestimating and belittling the unemployment rather than with the consideration of remedies for it. The fact is, of course, that they are disqualified for dealing remedially with economic maladjustments precisely in so far as they are the political agents of a plutocracy. Big business profits enormously from its economic privileges, and it demands control of the government in order to make sure that its enjoyment of these privileges will not be disturbed. For the same reason it connives at corruption on the part of politicians and business men who are loyal to its interests. The question which Governor Smith can put to Mr. Hoover is, in the event of his election to the presidency, what will he do about it? From the progressive point of view, the great campaign object is to get that question asked maliciously, incessantly and most ostentatiously. How they will vote may well depend upon how effectively and pitilessly Governor Smith asks it and how candidly Mr. Hoover answers it.

Poison in the Melting Pot

ONE of the most important revelations before the Senate committee investigating the Continental Trading Company, Ltd., came last week. It was learned that a small group of wealthy Republicans, including William Boyce Thompson, General T. Coleman du Pont and John T. Pratt, in 1919 purchased the American Association of Foreign Language Newspapers. Though this organization was losing money, they paid $200,000 for it, and assumed liabilities of an equal sum. M. J. Pessin, who afterward became president of the association at the invitation of Mr. Pratt, told the Senate committee that the purchase was made for "political purposes."

To understand the meaning of this transaction, a word of explanation is necessary. There are in the United States about a thousand foreign-language newspapers, each of which serves people of one race in one community. Rarely are two papers published in the same tongue in the same city; and naturally, hardly one in a thousand of the subscribers of these journals reads English. For that reason, the editor of the typical foreign-language paper occupies a unique position in the community of his readers. He is accepted as an infallible source of wisdom; as a rule, his advice is followed in all affairs which come within the province of journalism, and some which lie outside it.

Many editors of foreign-language newspapers fulfill this function admirably. They are conscientious and competent men who live up to the best traditions of the American press. But there are also others who shamefully abuse the confidence of their readers. The columns of the paper edited by a man of this latter type are open to purchase by the highest bidder. If a labor dispute occurs in which his readers are involved, it is a familiar phenomenon for him to sell out to the employer, and by printing false news and biased arguments, seek to persuade the men to yield. In politics, the record of the same sort of paper is equally bad. It is, in fact, quite customary in a presidential year for new journals to be started here and there which are published, or at any rate, printed, for a few months in order to get the "political advertising" which is distributed lavishly at such times. As soon as the election is past, these papers disappear for another three years and six months. Even among the less ephemeral journals, which are at least regularly published and subscribed for, it is not at all uncommon for the editor to endorse that political party which "takes care of him" in the most handsome manner.

Despite such emoluments as these, most of the

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foreign-language newspapers in the United States are not very stable financial institutions. They do not earn large sums through legitimate channels, partly because they get comparatively little national advertising. The advertising agencies which direct such business are conducted by English-speaking Americans, who do not know the languages of the foreign press and are ignorant of the potential markets its readers offer. It was because of this fact that the American Association of Foreign Language Newspapers was founded, under another name, by Mr. Louis Hammerling, as an agency to obtain national advertising for these newspapers. In this business it at one time achieved a substantial success, though the war period, during which many foreign-language newspapers were under suspicion of being indifferent or hostile to the American cause, injured its profits. It is obvious that an advertising agency which controls much of the revenue of a newspaper has a great potential influence over the editorial columns of that newspaper. It is equally obvious that an editor who will sell his pen to the highest bidder among local politicians and capitalists is likely to be willing to do the same thing when the purchaser is in New York. Charges that this was the case in the relations between Mr. Hammerling and his client newspapers were not lacking, in the days when the organization was still in his hands.

When Mr. Pessin says that Messrs. Thompson, du Pont and Pratt bought the American Association of Foreign Language Newspapers for "political" purposes, the foregoing facts must be borne in mind. The business, and the only business, of this high-sounding "association" was to sell advertising, and to capitalize on the influence over the foreign-language press which the sale of advertising made possible. At the time it was taken over, remember, it was losing money and had accumulated a deficit, according to Mr. Pessin, of $200,000. What possible legitimate reason did a group of wealthy Republicans have for spending $400,000 on such an enterprise? None. They wanted the organization, obviously, because through it they hoped to bring pressure to bear on the foreign-language newspapers, of which some 350 to 400 had direct relations with it. How successful they were, it would be impossible to say without a research through the back files of many foreign-language newspapers, a research which would take many months and necessitate a heavy expense. But it is fair to suppose that unless these astute gentlemen felt that they had a good chance of success, they would not have sunk $400,000 in the enterprise. What they did was a cold-blooded piece of business-in-politics. It was on all fours with the purchase of votes in Pennsylvania and the public-utility contributions to the campaign fund of Frank L. Smith in Illinois. In every instance it is fair to assume, unless the contrary is definitely proved, that the gentlemen who paid out the money got value received.

Hobson's Choice for the Amalgamated

MAYOR Walker of New York is well advised in abandoning the attempt to settle the dispute between the Interborough Rapid Transit Company and the Amalgamated Association of Street-car Employees by private negotiation. The more explicit and public he can make the contentions of the parties to the dispute, the better it will be for the workers, the stock-holders of the Interborough and the people of New York. Public opinion in New York will in the long run have to decide the issue. The controversy between the Interborough Company and the Amalgamated does not lend itself to compromise or adjustment. Their contentions are mutually exclusive. The approval of the point of view of either implies the sharp disapproval of the point of view of the other. If one policy succeeds, the other must fail and be totally renounced. The people of New York will in the end have to face the question whether they will decide in favor of the Interborough or the Amalgamated.

The question concerns the right of the employees of the Interborough to exercise freedom of judgment in joining a union. The Company does not and will not allow them to exercise any such right. It has itself organized a union which consists exclusively of its own employees. It will not employ any worker who is not a member of this company union, and any worker who belongs to an outside union is not eligible for membership in its Brotherhood. The New York courts have recently decided that the contract to this effect which the worker is obliged to sign in order to obtain employment does not deserve to be protected by the process of injunction, but this decision, while it should have an important influence on public opinion, does not, of course, prevent the Interborough from imposing the contract on its employees to the full extent of its power. For some weeks it has been systematically demoting or discharging men who had joined or were suspected of joining the Amalgamated. Its management intends to stamp out any disposition to ignore the contract. It is prepared for a strike and presumably is not afraid of the result. General Manager Hedley may or may not know how many members of the Brotherhood would go out if a strike were called, but in order to be on the safe side he has recruited some thousands of strike-breakers, and will not budge from his position. He is letting Mayor Walker, the Amalgamated officials, their jobless converts and the patrons of the subway do the worrying.

The city administration and some of the newspapers charge the Interborough Company with being perfectly willing to provoke a strike in order to maintain the discipline of its company union; and the management of the company would probably be willing to admit the truth of the charge. It will

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not have to suffer from many of the penalties which are usually visited upon a corporation which forces its employees to strike. Under its contract with the city its preferential share of the earnings is safeguarded, strike or no strike, so that the expense of hiring strike-breakers and the like will be paid by the city rather than out of its own income. On a previous occasion, when a strike occurred, the directors of the company voted to Mr. Hedley and Mr. Quackenbush handsome bonuses for their services during the strike. But their chief reason for being provocative is that, according to the newspapers, a strike which involves the suspension of service of a public utility is unjustifiable no matter whether it is provoked or not. The Amalgamated may have the better of the controversy up to the moment that the strike is called, but thereafter it is condemned by virtue of the inconvenience to which it subjects the "public."

So far as we see, the Interborough Company is playing the game with loaded dice, and the spokesmen of "public opinion" in New York watch the performance, if not with approval, at least with cheerful resignation. The New York Times, for instance, declares that the position of the Interborough management may be "arbitrary," but it is irresistible. A subway strike would almost make Mr. Hedley and his lawyer "popular," even though they were deservedly unpopular before. The New York World assumes substantially the same position. It declares that the Amalgamated, in fighting to organize the Interborough employees, is affirming an essential workers' right, which it is fully justified in cherishing, but the excellence of its cause does not provide any sufficient excuse for a walkout. "By striking they would alienate much of the sympathy which they have won in their struggle for recognition and destroy the fruits of the victory which they have won in the courts." Both these newspapers hand out to the aggrieved workers the same dubious consolation. "Time and patience," says the Times, "are the best aids of the Amalgamated Association in its hopes of unionizing the subway employees." "Time is on the side of the workers," proclaim the World, "in their fight for the right of independent organization."

These expressions of editorial opinion afford a perfect and, unfortunately, a typical example of the way in which the newspapers, like the politicians, insist for the benefit of their readers' prejudices and comfort upon obscuring and falsifying the edge of a sharp issue. The Amalgamated, it is admitted, is fighting in a justifiable cause. Should it lose, it is not merely beaten; it is in this relationship annihilated. A union which cannot protect its own members against discharge for the offense of joining the union might as well retire from business. In the circumstances the only way in which it can protect its members is by striking. Yet when it threatens to strike, the newspapers forbid it to invoke its one available remedy. They counsel the union workers to summon time and patience to their assistance. As if the members of the Amalgamated who are losing their jobs could support their families on time and patience. As if a worker would have any sufficient inducement to join a union which connot protect him from being discharged as a member of the union. As if the protagonists of any right in the history of the world ever triumphed against entrenched power by allowing themselves to be defeated and discredited and then calling upon time from the vasty deep to come to their aid.

We are not arguing that the union would do well to order a strike. Whether it has more to gain or lose by striking is a matter which the officials must decide for themselves on grounds of expediency. We are only arguing the gross unfairness of allowing a public utility company to provide a strike, but forbidding its employees from acting on the provocation. The Interborough Company is granted a license to coerce its employees, while its employees are refused a license to coerce the Interborough. If this discrimination is in the circumstances unavoidable, well and good, but in that event why pass the responsibility for providing a remedy on to the convenient but slippery and remote shoulders of Father Time? Either admit that the government of New York is willing to discriminate against the organized worker and in favor of the Interborough, and justify, as many do, the righteousness of the discrimination, or demand for the protection of the employee of a public utility a compulsory recognition of that organization of employees favored by a majority in a secret ballot. If the city for its own convenience is to deprive the Interborough employees of the right to walk out on their jobs and interrupt the transit service, it should guarantee to them satisfactory wages and working conditions and the right to consult and to enter into free associations with one another. It is the coercive and lopsided labor policy of the Interborough Company which justifies the state in interfering and in securing continuity of service to the public without depriving the employee of the right to associate with his fellow employees for their joint welfare.

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A Short View of Proust

THE final volumes of Marcel Proust's novel have at last been published ("Le Temps Retrouvé." Paris: Librairie Gallimard) and it has now for the first time become possible to judge the work as a whole. "A La Recherche du Temps Perdu" has been peculiarly unfortunate in the conditions under which it has had to appear. The whole book was written by Proust between 1906 and 1912. The first section was published in the November of 1913, on the eve of the War. The publication of the second section, of which the proofs had already been printed when war was declared, was postponed until after the Armistice. At this time, Proust expressed a desire to have the whole book (which, in the meantime, he was rewriting so as to include the War) published at once in four volumes; but the publishers would only consent to bring out "A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleur" by itself. The other volumes, however, followed at intervals of a year, until Proust's death in 1922. This created another obstacle: we can well believe that the difficulties of the editors in deciphering Proust's manuscript and correcting the text were extreme. In any case, "Albertine Disparue" did not appear until 1925; and "Le Temps Retrouvé" has only just brought the story to its conclusion, fourteen years after the appearance of the beginning and five years after Proust's death.

It has thus been peculiarly difficult, not merely to estimate Proust's success as an artist, but even to read him properly. The situation seems to have got on his nerves: he is always worrying in his letters for fear the early part of his novel, read without the rest, may seem incoherent and meaningless, or protesting against critics who have accused him of following a random association of ideas: "Where I was looking for fundamental laws, I was described as preoccupied with detail." What astonishes us today, with the whole enormous book before us, is the steadiness and the logic with which he has carried out so vast a design, his complete mastery of his complex subject; and it is worth while to review the whole work, making such reflections as would have been impossible with anything less than the whole before us.

Proust's novel is, then, a symphonic structure rather than, in the ordinary sense, a narrative. Like so many other important modern writers, Proust had been reared in the school of symbolism and had all the symbolist's preoccupation with musical effects. Like many of his generation, he was probably as deeply influenced by Wagner as by any writer of books, and it is characteristic of his conception of his art that he was in the habit of speaking of the "themes" of "A La Recherche du Temps Perdu." The book begins with what is really an overture, of which it is important, as we shall see later, to note the first chord: *"Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure,"* followed by a second sentence in which the word *"temps"* twice recurs. It is the vague world of sleep: the narrator, in his darkened room, has lost all sense of external reality, all perception even of the room itself. He fancies himself in other places where, in the course of his life, he has slept: a child at his grandfather's house; a visitor in a country house; at a summer hotel; in winter in a military town; in Paris; at Venice. "Ah, at last I've fallen asleep, even though mother never came to say good-night!" This is the first theme to be developed: we find ourselves in the grandfather's house. M. Swann is coming to dinner, and the boy's father sends him to bed without his mother's good-night kiss. The child is sensitive and nervous: he cannot sleep till his mother has kissed him. He sends her a note by the maid, but she refuses to come. The child is in anguish. He lies for hours awake, till he hears the door-bell ring and knows that M. Swann has left. Then he goes out into the hallway and throws himself upon his mother, as she is coming up to bed. She is angry at first: she and his grandmother, who are already aware of his tendency toward morbid sensibility, have adopted with him a policy of firmness. But the father takes pity on him and induces the mother to go in and comfort him. She reads him to sleep and spends the night in his room.

Thereafter we are introduced to a variety of personages associated with Combray, the small provincial town where the boy's grandfather lives: a hypochondriac aunt who refuses to stir from her bed; a provincial snob who longs to know the great people of the countryside, the Guermantes; an unhappy old music teacher, whom everybody pities because his daughter has disgraced him. M. Swann has married beneath him and comes to stay, with his wife and daughter, at his estate outside the town. The memories of boyhood are suddenly dropped and Proust tells us at length about Swann's marriage: though rich and in smart society, he falls in love, rather late in life, with a stupid *cocotte*, who drives him mad with jealousy. When "Du Côté de chez Swann" first appeared, even those who recognized its genius were troubled by its apparent lack of direction. Today, we can admire the ingenuity with which Proust, in these first pages of his book, has succeeded in introducing nearly every important character. And not merely every strand of his plot, but also every philosophic theme. We are able here to observe already one feature which all of his characters appear to exhibit in common. All seem to be suffering from some form of unsatisfied longing or disappointed hope: all are

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sick with some form of the ideal. Legrandin wants to know the Guermantes; Vinteuil is wounded in his love for his daughter; Swann, associating the beauty of Odette with that of the women of Botticelli, identifies his passion for her, ridiculously and tragically, with all the neglected artistic ambitions which he has always desired to pursue. At the end of the history of Swann, we are back in the narrator's boyhood: he has himself conceived a romantic admiration for the beautiful Mme. Swann and he makes a practice of waiting for her in the Bois de Boulogne merely to see her pass. This very November, he concludes, he has happened to walk in the Bois: the trees were brilliant with autumn; he describes the cold beauty of the day; but it is entirely a different beauty from the beauty which once intoxicated him. "The reality which I had known existed no longer. Because Mme. Swann did not arrive at the same time as when I was young and looking as I used to see her, the Avenue seemed quite different. The places which we have known do not belong only to the world of space, where we locate them for convenience. They have been only a narrow slice among other adjacent impressions which made up our life of that time; the memory of a certain image is only the regret of a certain instant; and the houses, the roads and the avenues are fugitive, alas! like the years."

Proust had at one time had the idea of dividing his novel into three parts and calling them respectively: "The Age of Names," "The Age of Words" and "The Age of Things." We are now in the age of names: we see everything—love, art and the great—through the imagination of boyhood. "A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleur" is, as it were, one long revery. It contains only one conspicuous episode. The boy falls in love with the daughter of Swann, with whom he plays in the Champs-Elysées. But the hysterical over-eagerness, the undisciplined need to lean excessively on other people, of the spoiled child he has become, now that his parents have already begun to treat him like an invalid who must be humored and indulged, end by exasperating the little girl and rendering her indifferent. She snubs him one day, and he is still able to muster enough strength of will to satisfy his wounded pride by breaking off with her: he betrays his weakness, however, by carrying his policy to the extreme of refusing ever to see her again.

As I have said, we have been submerged through these volumes—and for most tastes, have been submerged far too long—in the reveries of adolescence. But people who have stuck in the "Jeunes Filles en Fleur" and thus know only the subjective Proust inevitably acquire a quite false idea of what his genius is like. We are now to be violently thrown forward into the life of the world outside. The contrast between, on the one hand, the dreams, the broodings and the repinings of the neurasthenic hero, as we get them for such long stretches, and, on the other, the vivid and elaborate social scenes, dramatized and animated by so powerful a vitality, is one of the most curious features of the book. These latter scenes, indeed, contain so much broad humor and so much violent satire, in short, so much extravagance, that, coming in a modern French novel, they amaze us. Proust, however, was much addicted to English literature: "It is strange," he writes in a letter, "that, in the most widely different departments, from George Eliot to Hardy, from Stevenson to Emerson, there should be no other literature which exercises over me so powerful an influence as English and American." In the descriptive parts of the early volumes, we have recognized the rhythms of Ruskin; and in the social scenes which now engage us, though Proust has been compared to Henry James, who was deficient in precisely those gifts of vividness and humor which Proust, to such an astonishing degree, possessed, we shall look in vain for anything like them outside the novels of Dickens. We have already been struck, in "Du Côté de chez Swann," with the singular relief into which the characters were thrown as soon as they began to speak or act. I feel sure that Proust had read Dickens and that this almost grotesque heightening of character had been partly learned from him. Proust, like Dickens, was a remarkable mimic: as Dickens enchanted his audiences by dramatic readings from his novels, so, we are told, Proust was celebrated for impersonations of his friends; and both, in their books, carried the gift of caricaturing habits of speech and of inventing things for their personages to say which are almost invariably outrageous without ever ceasing to be characteristic, to a point where it becomes impossible to compare them to anybody but each other. As, furthermore, it has been said of Dickens that his villains are so amusing—in their fashion, so generously alive—that we are reluctant to see the last of them, so we acquire a curious affection for even the most objectionable characters in Proust: Morel, for example, is certainly one of the most odious figures in fiction, yet we never really hate him or wish we did not have to hear about him, and it is with a genuine regret that Mme. Verdurin, with her false teeth and her monocle, finally vanishes from our sight. This generous sympathy and understanding for even the monstrosities which humanity produces, and Proust's capacity for galvanizing them into energetic life, are at the bottom of the extraordinary success of the comic and tragic hero of Proust's Sodom, M. de Charlus. But Charlus surpasses Dickens and, as Edith Wharton has said, is almost comparable to Falstaff. In a letter in which Proust explains that he has borrowed certain traits of Charlus from a real person, he adds that the character in the book is, however, intended to be "far bigger," to "contain much more of humanity"; and it is one of the strange paradoxes of Proust's genius that he should have been able to create in a character so special a figure of heroic proportions and universal significance. Nor is it only in these respects that

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Proust reminds us of Dickens. The incidents, as well as the characters, in Proust are sometimes of a violent grotesqueness almost unprecedented in French: Mme. Verdurin dislocating her jaw through laughing at one of Cottard's jokes, the furious smashing by the narrator of Charlus's hat and the latter's calm substitution of another hat in its place, are strokes which no one but Dickens would dare. This heightening in Dickens is theatrical; and we sometimes—though considerably less often—get the same impression in Proust that we are watching a look or a gesture deliberately underlined on the stage—so that Charlus's first encounter with the narrator, when the former looks at his watch and makes "the gesture of annoyance with which one aims to create the impression that one is tired of waiting, but which one never makes when one is actually waiting," and Bloch's farewell to Mme. de Villeparisis, when she attempts to snub him by closing her eyes, seem to take place in the same world as Lady Dedlock's swift second glance at the legal papers in her lover's writing and Mr. Merdle's profound stare into his hat, "as if it were some twenty feet deep," when he has come to borrow the penknife with which he is to kill himself. And I furthermore believe that there is plainly distinguishable in the Verdurin circle an unconscious reminiscence of the Veneerings of "Our Mutual Friend": note especially the similarity between the roles played by Twemlow in the latter and in the former by Saniette.

To return, however, the structure of the novel now begins to appear. Proust has made of these social scenes (often several hundred pages long) enormous solid blocks, cemented by, or rather embedded in, a dense medium of introspective revery and commentary mingled with incidents treated on a smaller scale. Proust's handling of these complex social scenes is masterly: it is only in the intermediate sections that we feel he has blurred his effects by allowing the outline of the action to become obscured by the profusion of the hero's reflections on it. We become further aware that these main scenes follow a regular progression. In the early "flash-back" to the life of Swann which has been described above, we have already assisted at two social scenes on something less than the full scale. First of all, Swann has gone to dinner at the Verdurins', at whose house he first knows Odette: the Verdurins are outside society altogether and pretend to think smart people "tiresome." They are extremely vulgar bourgeois, who, however, have a furious appetite for entertaining artists and other persons whom they consider clever. Later on, we see Swann at an evening party given by a Mme. de Saint-Euverte: a few smart people go to Mme. de Sainte-Euverte's, but they do so with a clear consciousness of being kind to her. In the part of the book at which we have now arrived, the part which is predominantly social, the narrator first attends an afternoon reception at the house of Mme. de Villeparisis, an aunt of the Guermantes, who, though still on good terms with her family, has at the same time become rather *déclassée* by reason of a scandalous past, but who is a step above Mme. de Saint-Euverte, as Mme. de Saint-Euverte is a step above Mme. Verdurin; then, a dinner at the house of the Duchesse de Guermantes, who, though one of the smartest hostesses in Paris, occupies not quite the most exalted rank; and finally an evening reception held by the Prince and Princesse de Guermantes, representatives of German royal families and, not merely of the purest blood, but of the most inviolable dignity and correctitude. In the latter part of the book, we shall assist at three more of these scenes: in the first two, we return to the Verdurins, into whose salon the people from the upper strata have now, for one reason or another, begun to filter down; and in the last, which occupies the last chapter, we return to the top again, to the Prince de Guermantes's, at whose matinée we encounter, not only Legrandin and the Saint-Euvertes, but also Odette and a son of the valet of the narrator's uncle; and where the new Princesse de Guermantes turns out to be none other than Mme. Verdurin, whom the Prince, ruined by the defeat of Germany, has married for her money.

In the meantime, however, to return to the section we have been discussing ("Le Côté de Guermantes" and the first part of "Sodome et Gomorrhe"), which is principally concerned with the "world" and with worldly people, we here begin also to understand for the first time the author's moral attitude. We are presented with three great social episodes, separated only by briefer incidents, and each following the same formula and pointing the same moral. The first of these, the narrator's début at Mme. de Villeparisis's, is followed immediately by the death of the grandmother, which serves entirely to discredit the values of the snobs with whom the hero has lately been consorting. The grandmother, who has long been ill, goes out for a walk with the boy in the Champs-Elysées. While she has gone to the toilet, the grandson overhears the conversation of the woman who tends the toilet with the keeper of the grounds: "I choose my clients," she explains, "I don't receive everybody in what I call my salons!" The grandmother returns: she also has overheard the conversation: "It sounded exactly like the Guermantes and the Verdurins," she says, as they walk away; and she quotes, as is her habit, from Mme. de Sévigné. But she keeps her head turned away in order to conceal from the boy that she has just had a paralytic stroke. In a flash, by the goodness of the grandmother, for whom any sort of meanness or malice, for whom any sort of snobbery or worldliness, are impossible, Proust has swept down the whole web of social relations which he has just been at such pains to spin. The next episode, the dinner at the Duchesse de Guermantes's, is followed by the visit of Swann to the Duc and Duchesse de Guermantes,

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just as they are leaving for a costume ball. Swann, with one of those lapses of taste which we have been told are characteristic of him, clumsily discloses the fact that he has just been warned by the doctors that he is dying. But the Guermantes are made to behave with far worse taste than Swann, for they are so much preoccupied with getting to the ball, they take their social activities so much more seriously than anything else, that they cannot even attempt to think of anything human to say, in this distressing situation, to a man who is an old friend of both and whom the Duchesse, at least, admires. In the third episode, Swann appears at the reception of the Prince de Guermantes during the bitterest period of the Dreyfus case: Swann is a Jew and has sided with the Dreyfusards; and he is not so well received as formerly. The Prince takes him aside, and the guests murmur that the host has requested him to leave. Instead, we learn at the end of the evening that the Prince, whom Proust, with his masterly skill at what the conjurors call "false direction," has allowed us to suppose not only stiff but stupid, is, with his aristocratic sense of responsibility and his Teutonic seriousness of mind, the only person present who has attempted to form a just opinion of the merits of the case: he has come to the conclusion that Dreyfus is probably innocent and he has simply wished to ask Swann's opinion. (In the latter part of the novel, this formula is twice repeated: first, after the dinner at the Verdurins', in the conversation with the elevator boy, in which the latter explains how his sister, who has risen from the servant class by being kept by a rich man, exhibits her superiority to the other menials; then, in the final social scene of the book, where the daughter and son-in-law of the great tragic actress, "La Berma," who, by returning to the stage, has shortened her own life in order to pay for their social career, desert her in her illness and old age to attend the reception of the Princesse de Guermantes, to which they have not been invited and where the princess herself is Mme. Verdurin.)

In each of these cases, Proust has destroyed, and destroyed with ferocity, the whole social hierarchy which he has just so learnedly expounded. Its values, he tells us, are an imposture: pretending to distinction, it accepts all that is vulgar and base; its pride is nothing nobler than the instinct which it shares with the woman who keeps the toilet and the elevator boy's sister, to spit upon the person whom we have at a disadvantage. And whatever the social world may say to the contrary, it either ignores or seeks to kill those few impulses toward justice and beauty which make men admirable. It seems almost inconceivable that there should have been critics to describe Proust as "unmoral": it would be far nearer to the truth to say that he sometimes tends to deal in melodrama. Proust was himself (on his mother's side) half-Jewish; and for all his Parisian sophistication, there remains in him much of the moral indignation of the classical Jewish prophet. That tone of lamentation and complaint which pervades his book, which, indeed, never deserts him, save for the amazing humor of the social scenes, themselves in their implications so bitter, is really very un-French and in the vein of Hebrew literature. The French novelist of the line of Stendhal and Flaubert and France, with whom otherwise Proust has so much in common, differs fundamentally from Proust in this: the sad or cynical view of mankind with which these former begin, which is implicit in their first page, has been arrived at by Proust only at the cost of much pain and protest, and this ordeal is one of the subjects of his book: Proust has never, like these others, been reconciled to disillusionment. This fact is clearly one of the causes of that method which we find so novel and so fascinating of making his characters undergo a succession of transformations: humanity is only gradually revealed to us in its vanity, its selfishness and its inconsistency. Anatole France would probably, for example, have put before us the whole of Odette in a single brief description—a few facts exactly noted and two adjectives which, contradicting each other, would have pricked us with the contradiction of her stupidity and her beauty; Stendhal would have stripped her of romance in the first sentence in which he recorded the simplest of her acts. But with Proust, Odette's past life is one of the last things we learn about her; and her mediocrity is never fully exposed until the very last pages. And even then, Proust cannot forgive her her moral insensibility, but must punish her with humiliation.

In that part of the book which we are discussing, we have fully emerged from the Age of Names and are well advanced with the Age of Things, that is, of realities; and we are becoming able to draw a conclusion as to why Proust finds these realities bitter, by considering the standards to which he brings them. These standards are supplied, on the one hand, by such artists as Bergotte, the novelist, and Vinteuil, the composer; but on the other, by Swann and by the mother and grandmother. I do not doubt that both of these latter were drawn, as Swann admittedly is, from Jewish originals; and it is plain that a certain Jewish family piety, a certain Jewish intensity of idealism and a certain rigorous Jewish morality, which never left his habits of self-indulgence and his worldly morality at peace, were among the fundamental elements of Proust's nature. The world is different from Combray, not merely because Combray is provincial, but because it is the world and occupied with the things of the world. It is really not Combray, but the soul of the grandmother, with its kindness, its spiritual nobility, its rigid moral principles and its utter self-abnegation, from which Proust's hero sets out on his ill-fated journey. And, as he is equipped, like many modern travelers, with moral passion but no religion, he will be compelled, as we shall presently see, to make a religion of art.

In the section which I have just been discussing,

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we have been shown the life of the worldlings and we have seen that it was vanity. Now we shall be shown the world of lovers and we shall find it an inferno. First, however, we may pause a moment to examine the architecture of the structure of which we now stand in the center; and we observe with astonishment that, despite the appearance of careless profusion and the real prolixity of detail, Proust, in handling his material, has practised a deliberate economy. We have noted the regular progression of the social scenes: we see now that Proust has made all sorts of efforts to secure the closest unity: half the characters are Guermantes; and almost the whole of the other half are people whom the hero knew at Combray (as the Guermantes, in a sense, also are). The Duc and Duchesse de Guermantes, Mme. de Villeparisis and Charlus's tailor all live in the same building in Paris as the family of the hero himself. All the themes have been stated in the first volumes; and all the pieces are now before us. No new elements will be introduced: Proust has provided himself with all that are necessary for his demonstration (the word is his own). We have become aware that the characters all illustrate general principles and that they have been carefully selected by Proust to cover the whole of the world that he knows: Odette is all that is stupid in woman which at the same time arouses men's passions and enchants their dreams; Charlus, the struggle in one soul between the masculine and feminine, and beyond that, the cruel paradox of a fine mind and a sensitive nature at the mercy of instincts which humiliate them; Mme. de Guermantes, the best that a snob can hope to be without becoming a serious person, etc., etc. These colossal figures, without losing individuality—we hear the very sound of their voices—take on universal significance. They continue, as Proust would say, to illustrate the same laws throughout their development. Some readers have been deceived by Proust's method into supposing that the characters of "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu" have actually no continuity; but they have fallen into an error similar to that of those persons who imagine that the clocks of modern physics are actually accelerated and retarded, and that the measuring rods shrink and expand. In the case of the clocks and the measuring rods, it is the conditions under which we observe them which make them appear to behave in this way; and with Proust, in a similar fashion, it is the point of view of the observer which makes the difference. Proust's method of presentation is one of his great technical discoveries. The more important characters in Proust undergo so many transformations that it would be impossible briefly to indicate their course. But we may consider a subordinate character.

When we first meet Mme. de Villeparisis, it is at the seaside summer resort, Balbec: the narrator's grandmother has known her during their schooldays, but, with her characteristic modesty and good taste, taking it for granted that Mme. de Villeparisis belongs to a superior social class, has never since attempted to see her. Mme. de Villeparisis, however, recognizes the grandmother and insists upon entertaining her. To the boy, who goes out driving with Mme. de Villeparisis, she is the perfect type of the great lady; she enchants him with her anecdotes of the distinguished people she has met at her father's house. When the hero next encounters her, however, it is at the reception I have mentioned above: he knows now that her social position is by no means so brilliant as he had supposed: in some way, she has lost caste; many people will not come to her house; she is also a sort of blue stocking: she paints and publishes memoirs, and has thereby ceased to be typical of her class; she is envious, sometimes mean, a little stuffy and a little pathetic. It sometimes occurs to the young man to wonder what dreadful sin Mme. de Villeparisis can have committed to have warranted such ostracism: he cannot imagine anything disgraceful enough, anything which such a woman might have done which such women did not do every day with impunity. Some time afterward, he makes an attempt to find out from her nephew, Charlus, only to discover that, so far as Charlus is concerned, Mme. de Villeparisis is not *déclassée* at all: she is simply his aunt and a Guermantes, and the opinion of the general world has never penetrated to him. He explains, however, to the young man that the late M. de Villeparisis was a nobody, with no title of his own, and that they had merely invented "de Villeparisis" in order that she might still have one. Years afterward, at Venice, the narrator once again comes upon Mme. de Villeparisis in the dining-room of his hotel. He overhears her conversation at table with the old diplomat, M. de Norpois, who has been her lover for years: it is one of those banal and laconic exchanges on the part of persons who have long been together and who have no longer anything to say to each other: they discuss their shopping, the stock market, the menu. Mme. de Villeparisis is disfigured by some sort of eczema which has broken out on her face: she seems tired and old. When an Italian prince comes over to their table, M. de Norpois watches her relentlessly with a severe blue eye to see that she does not say anything silly. An ordinary novelist would leave it at this. With Proust, however, the point of the story is still to come—in a final transformation which is retrospective. When the narrator leaves the dining-room and rejoins his mother outside, he finds also a Mme. Sazerat, an old, excellent and rather boring neighbor from Combray. Mme. Sazerat, ever since they have known her, has been living in very reduced circumstances. When the narrator happens to mention that Mme. de Villeparisis is in the dining-room, Mme. Sazerat begs him to point her out: it was for Mme. de Villeparisis, Mme. Sazerat explains, that her father had ruined himself: "Now that father is dead," she adds, "my consolation is that he loved

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the most beautiful woman of his time." The hero takes her into the dining-room, but, "We can't be counting from the same place," she objects. "As I count, the second table is a table where there's only an old gentleman and a dreadful blowzy little hunched-up old woman." We understand with astonishment that what the young man had been unable to imagine was simply that Mme. de Villeparisis had once been beautiful, unscrupulous and cruel, had wasted lives and broken hearts, like Rachel and Odette. Proust's skill at producing these effects is one of the most amazing features of his art: as each successive revelation is made, we see perfectly that the previous descriptions of the character fit equally well our new conception, yet we have never foreseen the surprise. Behind the varied series of aspects, we divine the personality as a solid and indestructible entity: the series, in Proust's own language, describes its curve.

To return, however, to the story where we left it, we now enter the inferno of the passions, of which we have previously had only glimpses. The hero's love affair with Albertine, which is balanced, near the beginning, by his childhood infatuation with Swann's daughter, is the culminating, and the most enormously elaborated, episode of the book. The narrator falls in love with a girl in almost every way the opposite of himself: she is lively, sensual, *piquante*. She is an orphan and has no money and is obliged to live with an aunt, who dislikes her and whom she dislikes. The aunt is a dull *bourgeoise*, but there is about Albertine a good deal of the Parisian *gamine*. While his mother is away at Combray, the hero brings Albertine to live in the family apartment, where he is, for the time being, alone. There commences between him and Albertine one of those fatal emotional see-saws which seem first to have been described by Stendhal in the love affair between Julien Sorel and Mathilde de la Mole. So long as Proust's hero is sure of Albertine, he finds himself indifferent to her and decides that he will not marry her; but as soon as he suspects her of infidelity, he becomes furiously jealous of her and can think of nothing else. In the meantime, he has become more self-indulgent, more lazy, more egoistic and more hypochondriac. He lies in bed till noon every day and will not take Albertine out: he keeps her like a prisoner. He leans too hard upon her, just as he leaned too hard upon Gilberte, but with consequences far more serious, because he has by this time lost the self-control which might have enabled him to end the situation, as he did in the former case. He becomes at last so morbid and exigent that, one morning, after a jealous scene, Albertine runs away while he is still in bed. The night before he has heard her, in her room, violently throw open her window—opening the windows at night was supposed to be bad for his asthma—as who should say: "This life is smothering me! Asthma or no asthma, I must have air!" He is filled with an agitation which shakes him more profoundly than anything he has known since the time, in his childhood at Combray, when his mother did not kiss him good-night; and as he had done on that former occasion, he goes out into the hall, hoping—in vain—to attract Albertine's attention. In the morning, he finds a letter, which says: "I leave you the best of myself." She goes back to her aunt in the country. Only then does it occur to her lover that she is, after all, a *jeune fille à marier* and that he has taken advantage of her situation to put her in an impossible position. He makes frantic efforts to get her back; then suddenly hears that she has fallen from her horse and been killed. After the news of her death, he receives a letter she has written him, in which she tells him she is willing to come back. He has suspected her of Lesbian propensities, and this is one of the things that has tortured him; but he is never now to know certainly how much of what he has suspected is the product of his imagination and how much is true. Some evidence, after she is dead, leads him to believe that she is innocent; other reports, that she was far more depraved than he had ever guessed, that she had finally come to believe herself suffering from a form of "criminal insanity" and that she had really allowed herself to be killed out of remorse for a suicide she had caused. In either event, he feels that he is to blame: if she was innocent, he has wronged her; if she was guilty, he has abandoned her to the perversity which she herself dreaded: "It seemed to me that, by reason of the fact that my love had been altogether selfish, I had allowed Albertine to die, just as I had killed my grandmother." In any case, this harrowing failure undermines his own morale. He completely collapses and takes refuge in a sanitarium, where he remains for years.

This episode with Albertine, upon which Proust put so much labor and which he intended for the climax of his book, has undoubtedly hitherto been the section least popular with his readers. I believe, however, that future readers will do Proust the justice of recognizing it as one of the most important love affairs in fiction. It is presented on so vast a scale that it makes considerable demands on the attention; and the interruption of its publication at the time of Proust's death made it particularly difficult to follow. Albertine is seen in so many varying moods, made the subject of so many ideas, dissociated into so many different images, that we sometimes become submerged and lose sight of the basic situation, of Proust's unwavering and masterly grasp of the characters of both the lovers, which make the catastrophe inevitable. Furthermore, the episode of Albertine does not supply us with any of the things which we ordinarily expect from love affairs in novels. But that is precisely its strength: it is one of the most original studies of love in fiction and, in spite of the rather highly special conditions under which it is made to take place, it has a profound universal

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truth. And it ends by moving us in a curious way, precisely when Proust seems casually to have neglected all the customary machinery by which emotion is produced. The tragedy of Albertine is the tragedy of the little we know and the little we are able to care about those persons whom we know best and for whom we care most; and those pages which tell how Albertine's lover forgot her after she was dead, by reason of their very departure from any other treatment of death which we remember in literature, give us that impression of a bolder honesty, of a closer approach to reality, which we get only from the highest and most original genius.

We must now, however, attack Proust's central ideas, of which this episode is the chief illustration. We have already been shown the failure of Swann to realize in Odette his vague esthetic longings. So the narrator's friend, Saint-Loup, has made himself miserable over a wretched little actress whom the hero has formerly known in a brothel, but who wears the aspect for Saint-Loup of all the charms and all the talents. So now the narrator himself has proved the fatal impossibility of ever finding our happiness in another individual. A woman will not, and cannot, live in the world in which we would have her—that is, the world in which we live, which we ourselves imagine; and what we love in her is merely the product of our own imagination: we have supplied her with it ourself. This tragic subjectivity of love is even more striking in the case of the sexual inverts (for Proust supplements the normal love affairs of Swann and of the narrator, with, as it were, homosexual annexes, consisting, on the one hand, of Charlus and his friends, and, on the other, of Albertine and her Lesbian companions); for here, to the eyes of a normal person, there is nothing romantic to be seen at all. In the case of a wholly noble and disinterested love, such as the grandmother's for the boy, the discrepancy is perhaps even more hopeless: for the boy simply takes all her attentions for granted, is too self-centered to be aware of her sufferings and scarcely thinks about her at all until after she is dead. And by one of his happiest strokes, Proust further shows us that the odious Mme. Verdurin is a victim of the same malady as the rest: her fierce despotism over her "little clan," her frenzied efforts to keep them together, her nagging them to come to her house and her persecuting them when they fail to, are all merely another form of the same passion which has tormented the narrator, Charlus and Swann: jealousy—in this case, transferred from an individual to a group. Nor are the lovers the only persons who fail through seeking to share their lives with other human beings, to extend their own private reality to the external world. Legrandin lives to abandon his snobbery; when he is finally invited everywhere, he no longer cares to go out. And, in a terrible culminating episode, Proust shows us the whole futile comedy enacted in an unexpected form: Charlus, who has been steadily degenerating, has finally arrived at a phase where all his more human impulses have perished and he has become perverse for the sake of perversity: vice itself has become the ideal. But his efforts to degrade himself are as ill-fated as the grandmother's efforts to consecrate her life to others: for the persons he pays to collaborate with him care nothing about being vicious; their heart is hopelessly not in their work. Even in pursuing evil, where satisfaction depends on others, man is doomed to disappointment. And even here Proust does not fail to show us in Charlus's senile and abject soul the last vibrations of that hope and love which life has nearly destroyed.

Nor does Proust's pursuit of this theme stop here. The conviction that it is impossible to know, impossible to master, the external world, permeates his whole book. It is reiterated on almost every page, in a thousand different connections: Albertine's lies; the gossip about the heir-apparent of Luxemburg; the contradictory diagnoses of the doctors on the grandmother's illness: the ticking of the watch in Saint-Loup's room, which the visitor is unable to locate; the names in the railway time-table of the towns in the neighborhood of Balbec, which first rouse romantic images in the mind of the boy and whose etymologies are explained by the curé of Combray, then become for the young man simply the stations of the Balbec railway and are later explained differently and authoritatively by Brichot, so that they take on an entirely new suggestiveness. This subjective world, in Proust, presents itself, like the universe of certain modern philosophers, as a continual flux: just as the alleys of the Bois de Boulogne, as he once saw them in his youth, under the influence of Odette, have now changed to something else; so love changes and fails us, and so society, which at first seems so stable, in a few years has recombined its groups and merged and transformed its classes. And, as in the universe of those philosophers who employ the concepts of modern physics, the world is a structure of events, interdependent, each event involving the whole, an organism; so Proust's application on an unprecedented scale of the metaphysics implicit in literary symbolism has the effect of enmeshing his whole book in a dense network of relations, of complicated cross-references between different groups of characters and of a multiplication of metaphors and similes connecting the phenomena of infinitely varied fields—biological, zoölogical, physical, esthetic, social, political and financial.

And as James Joyce, in "Ulysses," varies the texture of his narrative to represent the varying times of day and the varying states of mind of his characters, so does Proust, on his scale of a life-time, where the varying color and tone of the narrative correspond to the varying periods of the hero's career. To the iridescent reveries of boyhood succeed the talk, the sociability and the vivacity of

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young manhood; and to these, with that wonderful sunrise which brings to the hero, not the splendor of the morning, but the dawning of the knowledge of human corruption and cruelty, succeeds a nightmare of the passions, which at its climax, in the almost demoniacal scene where the Verdurins set Morel against Charlus, seems blasted with the dry breath of Hell. It is characteristic of Proust that, for all the fascination which the vices with which he is here preoccupied undoubtedly had for him and for all the comedy which he extracts from them, he should give to this part of his book the Scriptural title, "Sodom and Gomorrah." We feel indeed that all the characters are damned. Swann and the grandmother are dead. Bergotte dies; and at his death it is intimated, as it has already been intimated in connection with the composer Vinteuil, that only in artistic creation may we hope to find our compensation for the horror, the sterility and the despair of the world.

There is, however, yet another phase. After the death of Albertine, the fumes begin to clear away. When the narrator finally emerges, after the War, from his sanitarium, the world seems more sober, more level, less colorful, less troubling. He accepts an invitation to a reception at the Princesse de Guermantes's. On his way and while waiting in the library, he is several times visited by certain curious sensations such as he has already had occasion to record in connection with a clump of trees seen while driving, in his boyhood, with Mme. de Villeparisis, and at other moments. Why had he derived from them a mysterious satisfaction? He now determines to get to the bottom of them, and begins to see that they are simply the moments when, for an instant, external reality coincides with the reality within him. It is this internal world which is the true reality; and it is the business of the artist to find out what is beneath its symbols, which obtrude themselves on our minds upon the slightest provocation; to decipher its hieroglyphics. When he finally goes in among the guests and, after his long absence, meets the people he has known, he feels acutely the passage of time, which has profoundly affected them all. Still haunted by the image of Albertine, as he first knew her at the seaside, he expresses to Gilberte Swann (who has since been married) a desire to meet some young girls. Gilberte brings her daughter to him, and when he sees her, he knows fully at last that he himself is old. He has a vision of the time which he has lived and which he is still dragging with him in memory. While waiting in the library, he has happened to take down the same novel of George Sand which his mother had read him that night, in his childhood, when he had lain awake so long because she had not come to kiss him. And now, across all the years, he hears the ringing of the bell which announced M. Swann's departure, and is terrified suddenly to know that it must ring in his mind forever. From that night, when his parents first indulged him, dates the decline of his will. The slope which he had that night commenced to descend has brought him to the *débâcle* with Albertine and has left him, already old, with his wasted life, "le temps perdu"—a hypochondriac like his aunt Léonie, with whom he had supposed in his youth that he had nothing in common. Now he will turn away from the world: he will no longer look for happiness in others. The reality lies within him and it is only through literature that he can hope to rejoin it, to experience it. He will make of his life a book: only so can he retrieve that past which he now must carry along with him, with no power to change it, to better it. In the long last sentence of the book the word "Time" begins to sound, and it closes the symphony, as it began it.

In some such fashion, without doubt, Proust really composed his book. He began it late in life, when he had published and written little, "knowing," as he makes his narrator say, "nothing of his trade." "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu" is, therefore, even aside from Proust's genius, a very exceptional production. Proust worked under the unusual disadvantage of never really having written to be read: he had never put himself into communication with any body of readers: he had no public; the whole of his book had been written before he published a word. As a result of this, he often wrote sentences so long and so complicated that we are obliged to read them several times, and he allowed himself to fall into a repetitiousness which, as an artist, is perhaps his worst fault. Furthermore, as, with the exception of an early volume of miscellanies, he had never before written a book, he put into "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu" everything he knew—so that he often swamps his effects by overloading them with a cargo, a part of which, at any rate, if he had been a literary man in regular practice, he would already have disposed of, and perhaps to better advantage, elsewhere. On the other hand, the fact that Proust had never had to write for a living, and that he was able to command unlimited leisure, brought with it the immense advantage of making it possible for him to plan and carry through a work of the most ambitious kind. Proust was never obliged to go slowly, or to meet the demands of a current market: he was able, in a single work, to show his mind and his imagination in their full scope and depth; and he could allow himself any liberty. "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu" is one of those bold and self-dependent works, produced in absolute indifference to popular standards and commercial expediencies, which make the principal glory of literature.

Proust was a fairly rich man, who had inherited money and who had never had to work: he had always been able to afford to indulge himself. He had perhaps never, except in the army, had to associate with other men under everyday conditions and on absolutely equal terms. And as a result, beside the manias and morbidities of the solitary man, he betrays also some of the suspicions of the million-

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aire who is always afraid that the servants are lying to him, and is incessantly haunted by a delusion that everyone who shows him kindness is only after his money. And he has also had the opportunity of indulging his imagination in certain subjects, such as homosexuality, in a way which makes us feel, sometimes, that he takes too gruesome a view of them and on other occasions disgusts us with his appetite for the scabrous. And is there not also some self-indulgence in Proust's appetite for suffering? "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu," for all its humor and its beauty, is one of the gloomiest books ever written: Proust tells us that the idea of death has "kept him company as incessantly as the idea of his own identity"; and the very water-lilies of the little river at Combray, continually straining to follow the current and continually jerked back by their stems, are likened to the futile attempts of the neurasthenic to break the habits which are eating his life. Proust's lovers are always suffering: we never see them when they are not unhappy. His artists are unhappy, too: they have only the consolation of art. During those interminable and not infrequently almost intolerable disquisitions on jealousy and the writhings of unrequited love, we sometimes find ourselves irritated as we do with those dialogues of Leopardi in which he makes us listen while he rings so many ingenious changes on the theme that life is never enjoyable. With Leopardi, we are made uneasy by the spectacle of so vigorous an intellect and so distinguished a style applied persistently to the reiteration of the pitiful complaint of a sick man. If we did not know that Leopardi was sick, we should want to retort that the trouble with life was not that happiness does not exist, but merely that it doesn't last; and so with Proust, we long to suggest to him that there are other forms of creative activity than that made possible by literature—that his diplomat, M. de Norpois, when he created his alliances, must have enjoyed the satisfaction of knowing that he had imposed a little of his own private reality on the world outside; that Mme. de Guermantes must have felt it when she created her salon; and Cottard, the doctor, when he supervised his cases. Might not a better man than the hero have even succeeded in recreating Albertine at least partly in his own image? We are willing to agree with Ortega y Gasset that Proust has shown himself guilty of the medieval sin of *accidia*, that combination of slothfulness and gloom for which Dante submerged his sinners in mud. And we recognize in the atrocious cruelty which seems to dominate Proust's world, in the social scenes no less than in the love affairs, the hysterical complement of the hero's hysterical passivity.

But when we come to these concluding pages of "Le Temps Retrouvé," so somber and so moving, perhaps the finest in the whole work, when we hear the door-bell still ringing from Combray like the knock of Fate at the door, we become for the first time fully aware of Proust's bitter judgment of himself. We see how he has systematically created a character which shall represent him only on his weakest side. The man whom he has depicted, whose moral defeat is the theme of his story, could never have had the strength of this strange exaltation of art, so utterly divorced from every other source of human joy, which retrieves the moral defeat and which burns in these last pages; could never, in fact, have written the book. The person whom Proust has omitted was one of the most powerful minds of our time and one of the great writers of the world.

EDMUND WILSON.

M. Benes Pulls the Strings

THE Hungarian village of St. Gothard, which, according to the Hungarian Encyclopedia, is an important railway junction near the Austrian frontier and boasts of 3,000 inhabitants and 680 houses, has been put on the map of international politics. Since the first day of January, when an inquisitive Austrian railway employee undertook to examine the contents of five freight cars and exposed the innocent-looking cargo, marked "agricultural machinery," as a shipment of machine guns, the "affair of St. Gothard" has caused more uneasiness to the statesmen of Europe than any other political event of the past three months. As if an invisible press agent—with headquarters in Paris and Prague—had been pulling the strings behind the scenes, every day has brought some new development in the affair of St. Gothard, and its international scope has enlarged by quick stages. We heard first of 500 machine guns, which an Italian firm had attempted to smuggle into Hungary. Then the number increased to 2,000, and the sender was supposed to be the Italian government itself. The Little Entente preferred charges against the Hungarian government, accusing it of preparing for war; the League of Nations took a hand in the affair and summoned Count Bethlen before that high tribunal. International complications were discussed, and the name of St. Gothard became a synonym for the menace of war.

In view of these dramatic developments, the public at large was inclined to believe that the Hungarian government had perhaps already turned the country into an armed camp, and was only waiting for the arrival of a few hundred machine guns to attack the countries of the Little Entente. Yet

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those who knew the situation more intimately could only be amazed by the excitement caused by the St. Gothard affair. However bitter may be the sentiments which the Hungarian nation nourishes against the makers of the Treaty of Trianon, however strong the more or less theoretical irredentist movement, no sane man in Hungary would advocate a new war against the neighboring countries. A glance at the map of Central Europe should convince the most extreme nationalist that war under the present conditions would be equivalent to national suicide. The three countries of the Little Entente surround Hungary with an iron ring strong enough to choke her in case of war in no time at all, and the country's only real friend, Italy, is too far away to give any substantial help. So even if we suppose that the machine guns confiscated at St. Gothard were destined for Hungary, the importation of war material, while a violation of the peace treaty, would in no way justify the excitement it has actually caused.

The immense importance of the St. Gothard affair lies in an entirely different direction. The artificial exaggeration of a "war danger" is nothing but a brilliant diplomatic move in the interest of a grandiose scheme conceived in the chancellories of Paris and Prague. It is a scheme for a new five-power entente among the succession states of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, a new lining up of the powers in Central Europe under the supreme tutelage of France. It is the same scheme that was launched by Dr. Edouard Benes two years ago under the name of a Central European Locarno or a Danubian Confederation. The machine-gun incident is simply a welcome means by which the promoters of the plan may score a decisive diplomatic victory over their most dangerous adversaries.

It has always been the pet idea of both Paris and Prague to extend the Little Entente to Austria and Hungary and thus perpetuate the supremacy of French influence in Central Europe. The scheme had many obvious advantages from the point of view of all countries concerned and would help solve some problems which otherwise seemed to the superficial observer impossible of solution. A close alliance between Austria and the countries of the Little Entente would at once put an end to the possibility of an *"anschluss"* with Germany. It would give Austria a chance to regain the lost hinterland of its industry and would put the ailing republic on its feet. Hungary would also profit from an economic union with her neighbors and would be helped to return to economic normalcy, perhaps even to prosperity. As to the Little Entente, the inclusion of Austria and Hungary within its system of political equilibrium would be of obvious advantage. It would guarantee for the three allied countries the undisturbed possession of territories inhabited by a population overwhelmingly Hungarian and German; it would put an end to the possibility of dramatic surprises, however unlikely such surprises may be, and it would secure for Prague, Bucharest and Belgrade the complete political domination of Central Europe and the Balkans. The plan was feasible from every angle, and two years ago it was launched officially by M. Benes, with the strong moral backing of the Quai d'Orsay.

However, before the diplomatic negotiations could go beyond the stage of unofficial feelers, Italy had made a diplomatic move which proved to be disastrous for M. Benes' scheme—at least, for the time being. Rome had concluded a treaty of friendship with Hungary, saving that country from a complete political isolation, and making a strong bid for a dominating influence in Central Europe which would put an end to the French hegemony in that part of the continent. The Italian agreement meant for Hungary the unofficial support of England. It also strengthened her spirit and made her able to reject the offer of Prague, which was meant to keep her in perpetual dependence on her political adversaries. The plan of a Central European Locarno had to be postponed, and M. Benes, undoubtedly the cleverest among the diplomats of Central Europe, had to wait for a more favorable moment.

During the second half of the past year the psychological moment seemed to be drawing nearer. The axis of Germany's foreign policy had become a close understanding with France, and not only the government, but even the nationalist parties were willing to sacrifice the possibility of a union with Austria—which, as a matter of fact, has never been very popular either in Germany or in Austria, and has always been used as a bugaboo against France—to an understanding with the last-named country. Austria, too, seemed sympathetic toward a plan which would preserve her political independence and save her from becoming an insignificant part of the German Empire. Thus one of the main difficulties was automatically eliminated, and M. Benes, with the excellent sense of the born diplomat, immediately made overtures to Vienna in order to further his scheme of a five-power entente. The negotiations between Austria and Czechoslovakia (the latter representing the Little Entente) now assumed a more concrete form and culminated in Chancellor Seipel's recent visit to Prague. The statements issued by the leader of Austrian politics during his sojourn in Prague, in which he emphasized the necessity of a closer understanding with the Little Entente, created a considerable sensation throughout the continent and were regarded as sure signs of a new political situation in Central Europe.

There was, however, still another important obstacle in the way of M. Benes' grandiose scheme. It was the obstinate resistance of the Hungaro-Italian combination. Though Signor Mussolini was violently opposed to a union of Austria with Germany, because this would extend the frontiers of the German Empire to the Brenner, he was not less inimical toward the idea of reviving the former Danu-

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bian Monarchy in a different form. He wanted to preserve the present state of affairs in Central Europe, which offered a wide playground for the Italian diplomacy and an ever-present chance for the skillful use of intrigue. It became clear to M. Benes that the only possibility of breaking down Hungary's resistance to his proposed five-power entente was by an "incident" which would give him an opportunity to bully Hungary into acceptance and render diplomatic interference on the part of Italy powerless. Then came the St. Gothard affair, like a *deus-ex-machina* solution of all entanglements in the classic Greek tragedies.

The importance of the St. Gothard affair lay in the fact that here was a chance to place Hungary before the world in the role of a villain, to threaten the country with a renewal of military control and at the same time to ward off Italian interference by showing that she was a party to a serious international plot. M. Benes played his game with surpassing finesse.

He first lodged with the League a strong protest, in the name of the Little Entente, against Hungary and Italy, while the perfectly-functioning press machine of the Quai d'Orsay got busy creating an unfavorable atmosphere for the two countries not only in Europe, but even in America, which has been seeing the St. Gothard affair through the eyes of the French, rather than in the more sober and realistic view of the English. At the same time, however, he surprised the world by making an official proposal to Hungary to join the Little Entente. Twenty-four hours after Hungary had been summoned before the League of Nations, M. Benes made known in all its details his plan regarding a Danubian Confederation. He gave interviews in Geneva stretching out the hand of a friend to Hungary. At the same time he granted other interviews in which he denounced the Hungarian-Italian "combination." While those ignorant of the preceding chapters of this fascinating adventure in high diplomacy were amazed and confused by the apparently contradictory attitude of the leader of the Little Entente, connoisseurs observed with interest the skillful development of the affair. Behind the scenes Europe prepared for a struggle. France supported the Little Entente with all its might, Italy, helped by the benevolent neutrality of England, kept France in check, and Germany was satisfied with the role of a disinterested observer. She was ready to cast her vote for the cause of Hungary, if she could do so without jeopardizing the friendship of France. She was equally willing to second the French motion if she could extract something from France for her help. This diplomatic battle is still going on, with the supremacy in Central Europe as its prize. France is trying to break the strength of Italian influence and to fortify her own position by forming the new five-power entente. Meanwhile the world is told that all this excitement was caused by the appearance of a few dozens of machine guns at an Hungaro-Austrian border station, and that what the big powers are doing in Geneva is a heroic effort to preserve peace in Europe. In any case, the success of the show is secured. The performance before the League will either end in the defeat of the Italian-Hungarian combination and the formation of M. Benes' five-power entente or in the victory of the accused parties and a "whitewashing" investigation of the St. Gothard affair. In either case, the world will applaud "those who saved the peace of Europe," and the underground battle for the hegemony in Central Europe will go on.

The natural solution of the situation would be, of course, a closer understanding between the countries of Central Europe, but on a basis entirely different from that proposed by M. Benes. No real understanding can be established among these jealous, fearful and aggressive countries while the unjust and damaging stipulations of the peace treaties continue. But under such conditions the Central European Locarno would be of no value for those who are so strongly advocating it. If peace should be preserved at the cost of remedying the great injustice that has been done, then France and the Little Entente greatly prefer to let everything remain as it is. According to the ethics of modern diplomacy and statesmanship, it is better to be unjust and dominate, than to do justice and lose supreme power.

EMERY DERI.

Child Labor and the Future

HOW does the problem of child labor in the United States stand at the beginning of the second quarter of 1928? What new aspects have been revealed lately, and along what lines are the authorities in this field thinking? These are questions which, it can be demonstrated, deserve consideration.

Let it be admitted once and for all that the old picture of long lines of little children, stealing out at dawn to wend their way to mines, factories and mills, has disappeared. True, many states still have inadequate legislation, and in others there are instances of illegal employment; but while children are still selling newspapers on the streets, appearing in vaudeville shows, and helping to make the latest thrills for the movies, the old sob-story of youngsters sweltering in the blow rooms of the glass factories and spinning out their lives in the cotton mills no longer need be told.

But to stop at saying that the worst evils have been eliminated would be to give a very incomplete picture. Even the total extermination of harmful child labor—still a distant goal—would leave us confronted by one of the most challenging problems of our times—namely, juvenile employment and its relation to health, safety and education. It was rela-

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tively easy to indict the spectacular abuse of children; but juvenile employment requires a more scientific and dispassionate approach, in the light of the best knowledge of modern psychology and educational theory.

Before discussing these new aspects, it is desirable to pass in swift review conditions as they exist today. If we had a federal child-labor law, or anything approaching uniformity in state legislation, a measuring rod could be applied and much of the present confusion and contradiction regarding the extent of child labor could be cleared up. As it is, to study child labor is like playing grab bag—we never know what we shall find. We get together the several hundred state laws relating to child labor, school attendance, hours of work, etc. Look at one of them, the very simple child-labor law of South Carolina. Attached is its companion, an even simpler school-attendance law. The simplicity of these laws is their only virtue—for in content they are reminiscent of the early statutes of the nineteenth century. In South Carolina children need go to school only four months a year (or less if the term is shorter), they may leave school forever at the age of fourteen, regardless of the grade they have completed, and even those under fourteen may be excused, under the guise of a poverty exemption. They may work as many hours as they (or their parents) wish, in any capacity, except in mills, factories, mines and messenger work. In these occupations, the minimum age of fourteen and a ten-hour day and fifty-five-hour week prevail. If such regulation abolishes child labor, then, indeed, the evil is no more.

Look, again, at the unique statutes of Ohio. These keep children out of industry and in school until they are eighteen, unless they are sixteen and have completed the seventh grade. Several carefully safeguarded exemptions are made which assure sufficient flexibility to care for children of fourteen who wish to work when school is not in session, and for various youngsters whose special needs may best be served by a combination of work and schooling or even by withdrawal from school. The Ohio law sensibly attempts to minimize the hardships which restrictive legislation for older children inevitably works in individual cases.

The quality of the law is not a sectional matter. In two Southern states, for instance, Mississippi and Virginia, we find the advanced standard of a forty-four-hour week, which exists in only four states, but Mississippi has a compulsory-attendance law rivaled by none in its weakness, except possibly South Carolina, and Virginia is one of six states having no educational requirement whatever for children leaving school for work. Traveling north, we find Rhode Island, in a progressive spirit, accepting the idea of a fifteen-year age limit while most states still think in the terms of fourteen years, yet year after year Rhode Island defies every attempt to reduce its ten-hour day and fifty-four-hour week. Pennsylvania clings to a nine-hour day; New Jersey allows children of fourteen to leave school for work on the completion of the fifth grade. California, in spite of many excellent features in her law, permits work till ten P. M.

What degree of regulatory measures must a state achieve before it can regard itself as "cured" of child labor? Let us recall that every state now has a fourteen-year age limit of some kind for entrance to industry. True, some apply only during school hours, some do not include all occupations, some carry poverty exemptions or other loopholes, but even by manufacturers fourteen is recognized as the earliest age at which a child should begin work. In thirty states a child under sixteen cannot leave school for work unless he has completed at least the sixth grade, and in twenty it is the full elementary course. Night work is prohibited in most states. Hours of work range from a forty-four-hour week in four states to a sixty-hour week in two states. Laws forbidding the employment of children under sixteen in dangerous trades are common, though there is a tremendous latitude in the states' ideas of what constitutes dangerous employment. Is child labor, therefore, under control? Or does the fact that the regulatory measures, usually regarded as minimum standards for protection, are far from universal indicate that it is still a serious problem?

Leaving for a moment the field of legislation and attempting to measure child-labor progress in quantitative terms, we are on somewhat steadier ground, though under the handicap of a federal enumeration which occurs only once in every decade. In 1900, when child-labor figures first raised their heads above their fellow statistics in the census volumes and cried out for attention, there were 1,750,178 children of ten to sixteen years in gainful occupations, 18.2 percent of all the children in this age group. By 1920 the proportion had dropped to 8.5 percent. This decrease is more apparent than real, for the largest reduction occurred in agricultural work, and the 1920 census, unlike that of 1900, was taken in January when farming work is at its lowest ebb.

Considering only non-agricultural pursuits, the number of children, of ten to sixteen years, gainfully employed in 1900 was 686, 213 (7.1 percent of the total age group), 557,797 (5.2 percent) in 1910, and 413,549 (3.3 percent) in 1920. The most rapid decline was for the ten to fourteen-year-old group, which decreased from 185,660 in 1900 to 49,105 in 1920. In 1920 only .6 of 1 percent of the children ten to fourteen years were gainfully employed in non-agricultural pursuits—one in every 175 children of these ages.

For fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds a decrease was likewise reported, though not so great as in the case of younger children, about 500,000 being employed in non-manufacturing pursuits in 1900 and 364,000 in 1920.

Another index to child labor is school attend-

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ance, and this has jumped far more rapidly than the general population. The average daily attendance at public schools nearly doubled between 1900 and 1925, the number of schoolhouses increased by 10,000, high school enrollment increased from 520,000 to 3,650,000. Parents and children, without coercion, are awakening to the folly of leaving school too soon. Nevertheless, the number of children seven to fourteen years of age who are not in school still runs into the hundreds of thousands.

On the whole, then, we may say that child labor does still exist, but that it is steadily coming under control, and its worst evils have disappeared. This being so, it is a mistake to approach the issues of 1928 in terms of conditions in 1900. We must give due consideration to our backward industries and backward laws, just as we do to retarded children in the schools—recognize that they need special care and attention, visit their legislatures oftener, urge them to higher standards, accept all efforts at coöperation—but we must not let them withdraw our attention from the quite different problems that are arising for youngsters fourteen to eighteen years of age. Have these older children any place in industry, or do they, one and all, belong in school? If they are allowed to work, what safeguards and restrictions should be imposed? Up to what age can we regulate hours and night work? How are "juveniles" to be prepared for work, how shall they find employment, how can safe working conditions be insured, what constitutes a reasonable wage? Should education be continued after employment through a system of compulsory continuation-schools, and how should such schools be conducted? Are systems of part-time education feasible, alternating study and work and trying to relate the two? To what extent can the schools continue their supervision of children who have left school and gone to work? What can be done in the way of preventive health work? Are periodical medical examinations of employed children practicable? These problems are more challenging and far more perplexing than those of the old-time child labor, which needed, primarily, prohibitive legislation. Now we must build up a constructive program for the young worker. Here the line-up is not a simple one of greedy employers and selfish parents versus the combined forces of righteousness. For, when we begin to discuss the employment of older children, we find even the forces of righteousness divided.

Psychologists warn us that we must not have our laws too rigid, that some work is good for children of all ages, and that for older children the fact of its being "gainful employment" outside of the home does not necessarily condemn it. The psychiatrist calls our attention to the exceptional cases to whom the school gives a kind of mental, and sometimes moral, indigestion, and for whom employment may serve as a health measure. Social case workers complain that child-labor laws are often too inflexible and work many hardships. On the other hand, flexibility, to many minds, spells non-enforcement.

The manufacturers' group (to depart for a moment from consideration of "the forces of righteousness") has seized upon this need for flexibility and, considering as "exceptional" all children who cannot keep up with the traditional academic curriculum of our public schools—although they constitute from 25 to 35 percent of the school enrollment—have built up an ingenuous-sounding theory that such children are "uneducable" and should be released to the beneficent environment of industry. This theory has the approval of some people engaged in educational work—those who accept the schools of today as the last word in education. Most leaders in the field, however, vision the schools of the future as organized to meet the needs of individual children, with new types of curricula designed especially for motor-minded pupils.

Students of child labor, on the other hand, have frequently urged as a minimum standard that children under sixteen should not leave school for work unless they have completed the eighth grade. But, says the intelligence tester, protesting: then you excuse from school the bright children who can most profit by further education. If this be true, does it not lead to the next step—that of keeping all children in school until sixteen years, with some plan whereby exceptional cases may be excused? This would have to be put in operation as a gradual program to be accompanied by a revision and elaboration of the school program, to insure for the children retained in school a truly educational experience.

At this point the question will arise whether the continuation school has not already taken care of this by permitting children to go to work at fourteen but requiring that they attend continuation school for a few hours each week? The value of the continuation school seems to be equally disputed by foes and friends of child labor, and sooner or later the question will have to be answered whether it may not be better to establish a sixteen-year age limit and abolish continuation schools. Some plead for both—no work under sixteen, and continuation schools for the sixteen to eighteen-year group.

What of vocational training? At what age or grade should it begin? Is there a danger of overemphasizing it? Can factories and shops be utilized for this work, or is it better for the school to equip its own work laboratories?

And if we turn from education to the field of health and safety, we find other problems awaiting study and solution. What constitutes physical fitness for work? Should a child be kept from work merely because he has decayed teeth or bad tonsils? What if he refused to have them looked after? What accounts for the large number of industrial accidents to minors? How can they be prevented? Is work necessarily injurious to young people? Is factory work more injurious than other types of employment—department stores, laundries, restaurants, etc.? We find a large percentage of

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physical defects in working children who attend continuation school. But these defects are relatively the same, in number and kind, as are found in a group of elementary school children. Does this signify that our school health work is not getting results? Is the remedy to keep such children out of industry until they are beyond the age of legal control, or to improve our school medical service?

Such are a few of the problems involved in juvenile employment, questions which are being considered in other countries besides our own, questions to which there is no ready answer. These newer aspects of the old child-labor question stand out as a challenge to the coöperative efforts of social organizations, educators, psychologists, economists, medical authorities, labor leaders, and—yes, even enlightened manufacturers. Only by a dispassionate consideration of all the factors involved, a willingness to test and weigh the merits and hazards of any given theory, can we hope to build up a program of action which both minimizes industrial hazards for the child and insures him the maximum of educational advantages—preparing him for the whole experience of life, including work as one factor, but not as the be-all and the end-all of existence.

GERTRUDE FOLKS ZIMAND.

Beautiful but Dumb

OUT of the rainy March night came J. Tompkins Riland, editor of The Woppingtonian.

"Elmer," said J. T., "with your notarious assistance, I will now liquidate my little account with Andy Mellon."

The newsdealer arose from a journalistic sea and performed the quaint ceremony. The editor muttered, "I do so" and bought two cigars. "Twenty-six thirty-nine in all," said the paid-up patriot as they settled down by the stove. "That's a lot of money."

"But think of the peace and quiet you're buying for that jack."

"Meaning what, if anything?"

Elmer chose to announce the result of certain scientific researches. The sting of the presidential bee, he held, caused a kind of sleeping sickness accompanied by cold feet. Let a statesman be mentioned, even in a whisper, and he gets paralysis of the vocal chords. "A bozo may be as gabby as an admiral, and then leap year comes around and he shuts up as tight as an oil witness."

"Who," asked Mr. Riland, "has been pestering you with his silence?"

"Well, there's your fat college chum, Herbert Hoover. I suppose nobody has spilled more chatter on the topics of the day or night than Helpful Herb, but since his kelly is in the ring all we've got from him is a jit's worth of banana oil. When he bought chips in the Ohio racket he put his 'O. K.' on those two noble experiments, prohibition and Cal Coolidge, then he closed up his trap for the season.

"What about foreign problems? A toothless old gaffer like you can remember when Bertie was bleeding and dying for the League of Nations, the World Court and all the side dishes. That stuff is not so hot now, so he buttons up his face, and I hear he's all set to salve himself out of the European game.

"All right, then, take flood relief. Who's got a better license to talk about the big washout than Little Friend of All the World? But when they had him up for examination in the Senatorium did this trouble shooter come across with a helpful hunk of knowledge? No, no, Nanette. He just pulled a Barney. If he had handed us the lowdown he'd have got in Dutch with Calvin and ended up in the Papa Spank Club. He's not so hipped about the Mississippi this year, anyhow. His favorite river is the Potomac.

"The cheesiest mess we've got on our mitts today is soft coal, and H. H. has poked his beezer into that, too, but does he annoy the mike on this burning question? Not with a flock of horny-handed voters on one side and the Mellon boys on the other. His heart may be in the right place, but his dogs are chilly.

"Let's see what the other Barkises are barking about. Barkis Willis says that any of the Ohio guys caught hitch hiking with Hoover will get no more pie. Take it from Willis and Curtis, there is only one question, and the answer to that one is locked up in their manly chests. Lowden used to throw in with the McNary-Haugen bunch, but he is playing them close to his vest button now. And all the glad news from Jim Watson is that he's still out of the hoosegow.

"Now cast your lamps at the other outfit. Al Smith, the logical contender, is just as noisy as a balloon tire. If it's New York, Al can shoot a line of figures that would sink a battleship, and nobody ever catches him in a phoney, but west of Buffalo, he's all blotto. He's a wet, but he isn't working at it this winter, and the stage whisper is that he would enforce the hooch law as well as the next bird, at that. His boy friend, Jimmy Walker, climbs on the water cart and makes a noise like a Protestant Nordic camel. If you ask Al, this ruckus is all about Jefferson. Did Tom do right when he kicked in steen million washers for Louisiana? Sure he did.

"Jim Reed is pulling some good stuff about the Grand Oil Party, but that lets him out. The day I quit him he was out on the gold coast promising them a whale of a navy to keep the Japs from taking Hollywood.

"Here we are only three months from the finish. The scenery is hung full of tough ones and no candidate will tickle them with a ten-foot pole. We shove our beaks into a man's private life—where he goes to church, if any, what liquids he takes with his chow, has he ever been abroad, and is it straight

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goods his wife's uncle plays pinochle. That all goes, but if we try to find out what is clicking in a statesman's bean, everybody says, 'Sh—Dunt Esk!' That's what slays me."

"Every soul hath its sorrow," said the editor.

"I wonder what would happen if a candidate came across with a real hunch on farm relief, hooch, coal mines, water power and foreign policies. I don't know whether we'd slip him the key to Pennsylvania Avenue or the frosted raspberry."

"You talk big about political courage, Elmer. Suppose you were a candidate and they asked you about prohibition. What would you answer?"

"Gravy!" said Elmer. "I'd say something snooty about companionate marriage, kiss a girl scout and pin a hollyhock on Lindbergh."

FELIX RAY.

Modernist Furniture

THE exhibition of modern French decorative art at Lord and Taylor's has breadth, sweep, *élan*. The space has been generously disposed: the furniture and textiles are arranged in rooms and alcoves: and the large room that contains the glass, silverware, stoneware, sculpture, is in itself a contribution to what a modern room in a museum might be. It is a very good show indeed, for it gives a sense of the unity and interdependence of all the arts: but one can scarcely see the spectacle because of the spectators. They have come in thousands to this exhibit. They come: they look: they handle: they purr: they admire: they are shocked: they are delighted. One notes the women putting themselves in the midst of these rooms and wondering if they could live in them. They have become accustomed to a modern note in shops and smart restaurants; their men have accepted, with confused tolerance, the same sort of thing in their office building. But now these new designs threaten the home. The ladies pause!

Lord and Taylor have done an excellent job in putting such a comprehensive show before the public; but I confess I have more respect for the people who will look at this exhibition and pause than for those who will not quite understand it, or like it, but will think it their duty to swallow it whole. For the great danger is that we will swallow French modernism this season as we have succumbed to Spanish Renaissance, or Tudor English in the past; and the total effect on American taste and form will be just as mischievous. It needs no deep prophetic vision to see the furniture manufacturers turning out copies of modern designs for the next June market at Grand Rapids as they would turn out reproductions of any other period. I foresee this and shudder. Let us see if a little understanding and appreciation of these French products will sidetrack that catastrophe.

All this French work on exhibition has a unity: sometimes it is acutely modern, as in the excellent lighting fixtures, and sometimes it is not modern at all, but it is always French. Consider these products as a whole. They are based on two main elements. One is patient, studious craftsmanship which never entirely left the French workshops, no matter how trivial and stupid might be the designs that they carried out: this craftsmanship has risen to new opportunities in the manufacture of glass, for instance; and the patience and care of the hand-worker have remained even in products that fully utilize the machine. In part, these new decorative forms rest upon an understanding of the nature and technical limitations of silk, wool, wood, iron, glass. But technical artifice is not the only element: the other is the artist's response to the French, or rather, the Parisian environment, expressed organically in a preference for certain tones and colors. Except for one of the rooms done by an American designer, one notes pervasively the wan colors of Paris, grays, yellow-greens, pinks, browns, silvers; the decoration echoes the tone and mood of the best contemporary French artists—Picasso, Derain, Leger, Bracque, Vlaminck.

For a Parisian, there would be much to say for these color schemes: they would harmonize, perhaps, with some internal mood or attitude: at very least, he might enjoy them as he would enjoy the pale glint of the winter sun against the murky gray houses of the Seine, or the street lights against a foggy twilight on the boulevards, or the warmer, murkier colors of Notre Dame itself. Pictures and decorative background and the city itself have a unity: that unity is French experience itself: and this is what gives such a positive quality to modern French decorative art. Good: but the very qualities that must make this art warm to a Parisian make it cold, foreign, remote to a New Yorker. The more deeply one appreciates this French work, the more cheerfully one must leave it in the country of its origin. Our handicraft is insufficient, and in technical design we must rely much more heavily upon automatic or semi-automatic machinery: our background is different: our sense and feeling are different: and as these things work out in positive decorative forms, American art can no more be "modern French" than it can be Louis XVI. I will not argue with anyone who thinks that it *can* be Louis XVI; for those who think so—I say it brashly—understand neither France nor America nor the court of Louis XVI nor the functions of decoration.

The real problem before our designers today is how to achieve the common ground and the common understanding among American workmen that exists among the French. Despite the fact that the Lord and Taylor show impartially includes both the pseudo-modernists, whose feeling is still essentially rococo, and the genuine moderns, designers like Jourdain and Lurcat, the great triumph of this show is that it demonstrates that unity is possible, and that in France contemporary art is alive and active in every department. At present, we have a very shallow conception of both the modern and the American: too many of our designers think that a design based on cubes and triangles is necessarily modern, and if our textile manufacturers produce goods which use as a decorative motif the Niagara Falls or a succession of Indian tepees, they fancy, with amusing confidence, that they have created something genuinely American. This sort of understanding will not get us very far, we must go a little deeper than that; and this French show distinctly points out the way.

The problem of form can, I think, be left to itself,

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provided that our designers always work with an eye to the essential function of the product; this method has produced admirable results with our bathroom fixtures and our kitchen equipment, and, I think, it would do equally well with our furniture and accessory decorations, provided the designers kept it rigorously in mind. A dignified society will demand chairs of different shape from one that sinks easily into comfortable postures, and machine production will impose certain limitations or make certain concessions that would not arise in a purely handicraft technique: but once a rational basis of design is recognized, a steady improvement in form will take place.

The problem of "feeling" is quite a different one, and much more difficult; for this implies establishing a happy and harmonious relationship between the object and the person who uses it or beholds it. If I am not mistaken, color and pattern are the two chief ingredients of feeling —although form, too, undoubtedly plays a part. Feeling is associated, not with the production of an object, but with a common experience of life; it may alter without any essential changes of technique, as the flowery baroque altered into the severe rhetoric of Empire architecture, as the warm, sensuous, moist quality of Boucher altered into the rigorous line and the dry colors of David.

Modern decorative art is a synthesis of two things: new forms produced by mechanical methods of production or suggested by other mechanical objects, and new feelings. On the side of form, a certain severity and rigor is essential to modern art: but this does not hold true of feeling, for the organic opposition, which leads the office worker to spend his evenings in the abandonments of jazz, may also have its counterpart in decoration. On the formal side, then, we can learn lessons from the French artists: but we must discover our own feelings, our own appropriate colors and patterns in our own way. How? Our American artists will teach us, if our designers are chosen from their ranks, and given the opportunity that Lurcat and Leger have had in the design of textiles in France, or if the American designer's appreciation of art gets beyond the stage of John Alexander and Bruce Crane. Hardly any of our good American artists works with a palette as dull and low as the French moderns. Whereas in France Matisse's rich, jewel-like color is in the present generation something of an exception, among the Americans, Marin, Sheeler, Prendergast, O'Keefe, Maurer, Pach, Hartman, the color is usually high and intense. This, I think, represents the dominant American feeling, although it fluctuates from generation to generation, and doubtless changes somewhat from place to place. One finds these keen colors in the early hooked rugs and patchwork quilts: one finds them in our original architecture, from Louis Sullivan's Golden Portal at the World's Fair to Mr. Ely Kahn's new Park Avenue Building. There are many sources for this feeling; but one need perhaps go no further than our brilliant sunlight, our clear air, the sharp forms of mountain and building, and the equally sharp shadows that they cast. These qualities, to say nothing of our buoyant, energetic temperament, should give our decorations a certain hard, bright, joy—as contrasted with the calm, slightly sad middle tones of contemporary French decoration.

Will our manufacturers learn this lesson? Will they understand this French craftsmanship and this French feeling so well that they will produce something wholly harmonious with our own needs? Lord and Taylor has promised an American exhibition next year if the public responds and if our manufacturers catch up with the need. There is no doubt about the public's response: they have risen eagerly to the bait, and they display, I think, a willingness to be led. For at least a decade the American artist has been knocking at the manufacturer's door; and, to speak frankly, the manufacturer has been asleep: he would not believe that modern designs were tolerable when the American artist and the American architect showed them to him: instead, he shrugged his shoulders and listened for the latest fashion hints on a new "period." Will he recognize the native product at last? Will he encourage it further? Will be acknowledge his blindness and stupidity with a generous gesture? Will he undertake a general house-cleaning in his dusty show-rooms, or will he just add modernism to his catalogue of periods? One pauses: yes, precisely: one pauses for a reply.

LEWIS MUMFORD.

Grand Guignol on Parnassus

The Furies, by Zoe Akins. Shubert Theater, March 7, 1928.

WHEN the Gleasons write and play their pieces, shall we say "The Shannons of Broadway" or "Is Zat So?" they know what they want to say. They want to say, "I hope you are having a good time. We are quite nice, you are safe in loving us. Whether we are actors or not—Jim is, at least, he knows his stage projection, Lucile knows how to be her entertaining self—we are nice people, and you in the audience are nice. We are not particular about ending this story our way, we have no particular way, we want to give you pleasure. We are neither low or high, we believe in theater entertainment, if we can put it over." They want to say this, they create and say it, completely.

When we come to serious plays by our serious dramatists, the case is harder. To find what you wish to say, in the complete sense that the Gleasons and other popular theatrical workers achieve, is not easy when you try for flights. You are tempted by the fiends of success, tradition, novelty, vehicle for the star, pickings from other kinds of drama and art. Miss Zoe Akins has theater talent, nobody can doubt that, and she has a certain poetic gift—somewhat deserted among the lures of Broadway, no doubt—and, like Mascarille with the rhyme, she never has any trouble with the first act's getting the situation under way. But the course of "The Furies" is wholly uncertain. The dramatist may very well know what she wishes to say, or rather the theme in her mind. She might even state it in words. But putting it into the dramatic substance of a play, translating every element of her dramatic matter into the essential character of this theme, is quite a different affair.

It is in such a translation that the whole creation of a work of art appears. One body is achieved, with one character throughout, one soul inhabits one form. But "The Furies" would confound any seeker, shallow or light.

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It begins with something of the old comedy plus elements of Eugene O'Neill's "Strange Interlude." Next we see certain effects akin to smart comedy, the sight of the dinner table appears to mix up the dramatist's essence. Then there is a lift into beautiful love motivations and flights of the human spirit; and after that, murder, cats and canaries, mystery, district attorneys, witnesses, pure, and rather rank, suspense. In the third act comes something of Grand Guignol, with madness, locked doors, subcutaneous horrors, and more of Hamlet and his mother.

It is all too bad, for the play has promising, vivid themes —the tower room; the jewels stored up by the man who has secretly loved Fifi, kept her with her husband in order to prevent her going with the man she loves, and lived under a cloud of intermittent insanity; the music off-stage played by his mad sister; the theme of the young boy's jealousy and devotion; the young woman thwarted by lack of money from marrying the man she loves—though she wears a most expensive gown, it must be said—and taking refuge in the lonely recourse of quotations from great spirits who have left their depths in poetry; these and many others are not the emanations of an empty soul or of a barren writer for the theater. But it all spills. We have something of the Gothic romances of Horace Walpole's day, filtered down to us through Charles Brockden Brown and then through Hawthorne and Poe, and slushed down later into the thrillers of melodrama. We have murder plays, O'Neill experiments into subtle and unsubtle asides; we have sudden plunges into Freud, and escapes into that background of beauty and poetry that haunts our hasty, foolish days. It is too bad, partly because it encourages people to decide that these poetic matters are not to be advised for the theater, to decide, for example, because such speeches as that of the heroine's about the champagne like imprisoned sunlight, or whatever it is, or about the clock, are superficial, false and impossible, that our dramatists must eschew poetic expression. It is too bad, also, because Miss Laurette Taylor is served so poorly, and for other reasons.

"The Furies" serves two good ends, however. It provides an opportunity for Mr. James Reynolds to school his remarkable talent in décor. His three settings for "The Furies" are somewhat confused at times with extraneous draperies or *nuances* in furnishing; they could wisely seek more of a certain imaginative concentration; but they catch what is at least the intention of the play, whether the dramatist wrote it through or not. The tone of the three apartments is in every case both engaging dramatically and decorative; the unusual heights are effective; and in the third act the use of the blue window spaces at the side, back and overhead deserves a better play.

And "The Furies" supplies a chance for some beautiful acting by Miss Laurette Taylor. That first entrance of hers is lifted to a plane that no dramatist I know of could quite foresee and no actress on Broadway could create. Something in the actress' judgment is wrong, or she could not bring herself to some of her lines and to some of the play's confusion of qualities; but the talent is there, a quivering, accurate, infallible reality, in voice, mimicry, feeling, and response to the other players.

Mr. A. E. Anson as the St. Elmo, Laura Jean Libbey, Dark Tower lover, lunatic and lawyer, convinces you that he himself has the right lack of humor for the role as it stands in the play. Miss Estelle Winwood convinces you that she has within herself some love of beauty, and of a loveliness overlooked in our usual daily life, and denied her in most roles falling to her lot, that makes her willing to play sincerely a foolish, hopeless part, though one where the underlying idea had good possibilities.

STARK YOUNG.

Art Embroidery

THE elevator lets out a wheel of women. Here they are, on the fifth floor, in a garden of bright permanence, blooming with cushions, artificial flowers, piles of aniline wools, bleak wide lengths of linen stamped with repeated and intolerable blue designs. Here are towels full of cross-stitch, patchwork already cut out and put into bags ("a revival of the art of our grandmothers"), intricate canvas squares ready for high-bred needle-point. Come and graze, good women. The cotton has been carded, the wool spun; the dyes are fast and the needles sharp and of great variety. Graze and forget time and love, hearty children, and the anatomy of the house. Here are gauzy lamp-shades, and the materials for their manufacture; you can veil every heartless sprig of electricity in your house with these. Sit here at this table and learn how to make a baby jacket with a pebbly surface. Or a pillow all of silk petals, or a fine rug garlanded about with roses, or a firescreen, with a conventional bouquet, nature twice removed, to be contrived by the crafty thread. Have you tried, you less ambitious, a bridge-cover with hearts and spades, a cover for hot biscuits, tea-napkins with Italian hemstitching? Our grandmothers never knew about Italian hemstitching.—There are moments when embroidery is enough. There is time you do not need: prepare to clothe the bones of rooms with doily and rug and pillow; the bones of time with stitches that can be kept or thrown away, as you prefer.

To push through this female crowd is difficult. These backs and arms and sides have a terrific solidity. They are heavy—wider at the feet than at the head. They have clean gloves, obstinately bright glances (a veil pulled over the sagging lines that have been creased by animal pain, and by grief more deep than the flesh can remember; over the dull eyes so used to door and window, table, bed and chair, the curtain raised in the morning, the lamp lit at night, the known faces pressed again and again into the eyes), slightly perfumed bosoms, neat shoes. They can wait, three deep, shoulder to shoulder, at the counters under whose glass the cotton and silk lie pressed like keepsakes. Tons of machinery, enough to crack them all to bits, rock behind the walls, over the ceiling, under the floors. A beginning autumn day rushes toward its early evening; the clocks champ minutes and strike all in a row; today is never again; it is late; everything should begin. They have the linen in the hand now; the purse is opened; the money is paid. Now they have stitches for tomorrow, put in to clothe the hours. They have time.

LOUISE BOGAN.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Lennes Excepts

SIR: You have published a review by Mr. Charles A. Beard of my recent book, "Whither Democracy?" which (if I understand the reviewer correctly) shows a sufficiently grave misunderstanding of its whole argument to make it necessary for me to try to set him right.

The review purports "to put forward certain tentative suggestions to be considered in connection with Mr. Lennes' iron laws." These "suggestions," evidently all intended to be antagonistic to my discussion, are seven in number, and may be stated briefly as follows:

1. Occupational classes are not sufficiently stable to permit of hereditary membership.
2. The occupational scale is merely an abstraction.
3. Heredity and environment cannot be considered separately.
4. There is no such thing as equal opportunity.
5. We do not know what intelligence is. We cannot, therefore, speak of "inherited intelligence" as if it were something independent of environment.
6. Other personal elements besides "intelligence" are involved in occupational success.
7. While people do differ "intellectually" (whatever Mr. Beard may mean by that), other elements contribute to success. (The last is a repetition of "suggestion" number 6.)

The most obvious remark is that Mr. Beard is indulging in the not uncommon sport of putting up a straw man and then knocking him down for the amusement of those who do not know the authorship of that man. Practically from beginning to end, the review is a misrepresentation, or, at best, a caricature. "Suggestions" one, two, four, six and seven have no place in a review of this book. To remark on them in order: My occupational classification is fundamentally different from that with which Mr. Beard finds fault. The remarks which he makes certainly do not apply to my classification. This disposes of "suggestions" one and two.

In this book I had no occasion to consider the relative opportunities of members of different classes *while they remain in these classes.* I dealt solely with the comparative opportunities for *interclass migration* that exist in different social organizations. Certainly, therefore, "suggestion" number four is essentially misleading when applied to this book.

"Suggestion" number six simply repeats what I have stated repeatedly (I think almost *ad nauseam*). Hence Mr. Beard's question, "How, then, can inherited intelligence, if there is such a thing, be the determining factor?" is out of place. I, for one, have never said that it is *the* determining factor. It is only *a* factor. "Suggestion" seven comes under this same head.

In connection with "suggestion" number five, I will take Mr. Beard's view, with certain reservations which I cannot state here. But he does say "it seems that mental qualities [whatever Mr. Beard may mean by that] are transmitted by inheritance." We will regard "intelligence" as meaning a collection of "mental qualities." Then I shall have Mr. Beard with me on this point, and my discussion will not be affected in the slightest.

"Suggestion" number three requires attention. It is obviously true that no inherited trait can show itself except in the presence of an environment. However, if a division of the heredity-environment organism into two segments is a "purely scholastic performance for intellectual convenience," this applies equally to the consideration of all so-called inherited traits. But, from any point of view, there is something to be said for the "germ-plasm theorists": For many years I have known the owner of a dairy herd. He started with ordinary scrub cattle. To the best care and feeding he could give these scrub cows, they responded with a milk yield of about five thousand pounds per year. Then he imported sires of high milk-giving strains. In the fourth generation thereafter his cows reached an average production of more than twice that of the original herd. Was not this a matter of germ-plasm? For one thing, it was not a matter of "social influence." The increased capacity of these cows was not due to "unconscious imitation" of their male companions. *"Was nicht ist, ist nicht."* If Mr. Beard takes exception to this view, I do not know what can be done.

Under this head, Mr. Beard seems to speak as if he thinks evolution is impossible unless acquired characters are inherited. There is not space here to explain, but reference may be made to any modern treatise on evolution, such as those by Conklin, Morgan, or Newman.

In this review, there are repeated references to "intelligence testers." Mr. Beard evidently has no use for them. But why have it out with them here? In no case did I make my argument depend upon results obtained by them. These were brought in only as illustrations and for verification. This is pointed out explicitly in many places in my volume.

In conclusion, I will express the wish that, instead of speaking of "a professor's book scheme," "scholastic performances," "intelligence testers bursting in upon us with their new creed," and "Mr. Lennes disclosing the secret of social evolution," Mr. Beard would give me a little help: Is it not fairly certain that most people engaged in the simplest occupations have a desire that their children shall reach one of the "upper crafts," to use Mr. Beard's expression? Will not our schools, our vocational guides, our democratic spirit, according to which it is not only proper but an honor to seek to rise, help greatly in enabling such children to do so? Is not this complex of conditions rather new in this world? If, owing to these conditions, many more such persons do rise than heretofore (while, of course, others fall because of weak qualities), then, in view of Mr. Beard's own ideas on inheritance, what will be the effect on our lowest occupational group? Will it not be impoverished in those qualities which make escape possible, and will not this impoverishment go on more rapidly as the impediments to interclass migration are removed? If Mr. Beard answers any or all of these questions in the negative, I implore him to give his reasons. These questions are the crux of my whole book.

All the points made here are elaborated more fully in the book under discussion, and there may be little ground for hope that this brief rejoinder will be of any use. Wishful thinking is something not to be moved by facts or reason.

N. J. LENNES.

University of Montana, Missoula, Montana.

SIR: I do not see any good purpose that can be served by a controversy between Mr. Lennes and myself. The curious reader can decide the issues for himself by reading Mr. Lennes' book and my review.

New York City. CHARLES A. BEARD.

They Hanged Them

SIR: Is there any known case of witch-burning in America? Evidently the proof-reader was on holiday, or Waldo Frank wouldn't have been allowed to burn witches in Salem.

M. L. BUTLAND.

Mattapan, Massachusetts.

Contributors

EMERY DERI, war correspondent and journalist, has been head of the European service of the Hungarian newspaper Az Est. He is now American correspondent for various journals in Hungary and Germany.

GERTRUDE FOLKS ZIMAND, editor of "The American Child," is Director of Research for the National Child Labor Committee, and is author of various studies on child-labor problems.

LOUISE BOGAN is the author of a book of verse, "Body of This Death."

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The New
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Spring Book Section

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Professor Babbitt Cross-Examined

IN the February Forum, under the title, "Mr. Mencken Cross-Examined," Professor Irving Babbitt traces the ills of American life to Menckenism, especially to the theory of criticism set forth in the phrase, "The critic is simply trying to express himself." Mr. Babbitt's article is so typical of the method developed in "Rousseau and Romanticism" and so illustrative of Mr. Mencken's theory of criticism that it would require extended space to make clear its unhappy illogic. Dissatisfied with America since James Russell Lowell ceased to write, Mr. Babbitt has built himself a cloud-city, compounded out of Buddha, Aristotle, Plato, and other favorite masters, from which he mournfully surveys the degradation of the humanitarian dogma. His book is an attack, and his article is a protest. Can there be a better illustration of Mr. Mencken's theory?

It requires only a cursory examination of book and article to detect the wide margin of error in Mr. Babbitt's analysis. He first selects an important name as the focus of infection in the region under survey. In the case of the article, it is Mr. Mencken; in the case of the book, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. After some uncomplimentary attention to this focal person, Mr. Babbitt surveys the results of the "doctrine" originating with him; and as he has a keen eye for damaging phraseology, he collects an imposing array of evils arising from this *fons et origo malorum omnium.* In the case of Rousseau, all the ills of contemporary society are traced to the unhappy Genevan, whose "romanticism" presently looms before the reader like a nightmare, too vast for belief, too black for humanity. In the article, Mr. Mencken is all wrong as a critic; the work of such moderns as Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, and Theodore Dreiser is then passed in "critical"—i. e., unfavorable—review, leaving the impression that their traits, which Mr. Babbitt heartily detests, result from worshiping the false and lying gods of Mr. Mencken. The method is smooth, plausible, and seems to have logic. Mr. Babbitt prides himself on being critical. But this method is not critical at all.

For it attributes to a "leader" all the vagaries which the lunatic fringe of any movement may possess. In place of the cool light of reason, it subtly interfuses the discussion with moral bias. In its grossest form, it exhibits that ancient logical pitfall, the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy. To make a "leader" responsible for the philosophical careers of his "followers" is to deny them all independence as volitional units; and this, in turn, is a denial of the possibility of that "inner check" dear to Mr. Babbitt, since in his view, men become, not willing human beings, but mere images, good and bad, of some original master. Indeed, pushed to extremes, when does volition become possible? If Sherwood Anderson and Dreiser are products of Menckenism, of what is Mencken the product? This is that deterministic naturalism which Mr. Babbitt inveighs against. When men are so easily made the slaves of delusive doctrines, a privately exercised "inner check" is about the least desirable thing one can offer them. But then, Mr. Babbitt is in favor of "tradition." Possibly if they become the passive servants of tradition, all will go well.

America lacks, according to Mr. Babbitt, a "general critical intelligence." This observation must come with a shock of surprise to those of us who have watched with interest that efflorescence of the critical spirit in the last two decades which has produced books ranging from the various Menckeniana to Lewis Mumford, W. C. Brownell, and Mr. Babbitt himself. One has an uneasy feeling that perhaps Mr. Babbitt does not read very widely in contemporary literature, or that perhaps he does not quite understand what he reads. Or should we ask what Mr. Babbitt means by "criticism," "general critical intelligence," "critical keenness," and similar favorite phrases? What do

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they mean? No question is harder of solution. Mr. Babbitt habitually uses terms romantically—i. e., loosely; i. e., with a vagueness sufficient to obscure their real lack of meaning, but ample to allow them to take on any meaning convenient for the matter in hand.

For example, in this same article, the Americans are urged to transfer the "critical keenness" with which they buy bonds to their general life. A little later, the seventeenth-century Puritans, who are credited with "inner control," which, so far as I can make out, is the same thing as "general critical intelligence," are blamed for glorifying the acquisitive life and for being unduly concerned with reforming others—traits, one gathers, in which they did not exercise their general critical intelligence. That is to say, inner control did not prevent the Puritans from living acquisitively, which is a bad way to live; but when we buy bonds—that is, live acquisitively, this is an example of what we could do in other fields—this is an example of a good way to live, though it springs from the quality we do not possess, namely, general critical intelligence!

Now, part of this contradiction is merely verbal and part of it is real. Either way, it points to the loose thinking and vicious writing in which Mr. Babbitt, like the romanticists, indulges. The trouble lies in the vagueness of the term "general critical intelligence," with its synonyms. They mean what Mr. Babbitt wants them to mean. He disapproves of that part of Puritan activity which exhibited itself as acquisitive living, and so "general critical intelligence" is made synonymous with non-practical living—i. e., with "inner control," with "awe and reverence and humility," with the Christian tradition. As, however, he violently disapproves of Mr. Mencken and wants to get rid of Menckenism, he would like to introduce a more active "general critical intelligence" into American life; and, to show that this is practicable, he picks out bond-buying as an example of what we can do. "Critical keenness" is now thought of in terms of the active life. It is too late to reform the Puritans. Mr. Babbitt wants to reform America. He wants to be an effective "humanitarian legalist."

Meanwhile, it is a highly interesting question whether there ever is, or ever was, or ever will be, any such thing as general critical intelligence. Transfer of training is something no psychologist is ready to approve. The successful bond-buyer is seldom a successful poet, and keen discrimination in appraising literature does not mean ability to secure votes. Mr. Babbitt gets around this by denouncing psychology as a "pseudo-science," but the stubborn thing remains to plague him. General critical intelligence is a cloudy dream, and no amount of talk about inner control or humanitarian legalists or the horrors of Menckenism is going to lead us into these misty mid regions of Weir. We prefer—to be brutal—trained stenographers.

But Mr. Babbitt goes further. He has, he thinks, a measuring rod by which we can establish the value of a particular action—something called "tradition." For example, Mr. Mencken, lacking humility, is guilty of the sin of pride; and if he would not turn his back on the Christian tradition, he would be a better man. Mr. Babbitt further laments that we have lost the classical "tradition"; we are in the grip of a terrible thing called "naturalistic realism," which is "a violation of the law of measure." Here it is he attacks the psychologists; their experiments "are unimportant compared with the facts" they neglect or deny. Until the question whether man is a responsible agent is decided, nothing is decided; hence, modern tragedy (like "The American Tragedy") fails to be cathartic. Our books are ephemeral. Their successes are those of scandal and advertising, and it is time for us "to initiate something of our own." What Mr. Babbitt really means is that we have initiated something of our own and that he doesn't like it.

Well, I am sorry Mr. Mencken is not a Christian, for then he might have some fun with the law of measure. For example, he might ask Mr. Babbitt what he means by "religious control." He might ask him whether the injunction to sell all thou hast and give to the poor is confirmatory of, or contradictory to, the law of measure. He might inquire whether the injunction to preach the gospel to all lands is Aristotelian moderation. He might inquire whether it was an example of "critical keenness" (such as appears in the buying of bonds) to command the disciples to take no money or food with them. And being an excellent Biblical student, he might inquire whether the injunction to the woman in adultery will increase or moderate the social evil. And if Mr. Babbitt counters with a familiar quotation regarding the things of Cæsar and the things of God, Mr. Mencken might bring up again the question of acquisitive living among the Puritans and the unhappy bond-buyer with whom we began.

Or perhaps Mr. Mencken, who is certainly no classicist, might humbly inquire about classical tradition. He might like to ask Mr. Babbitt to explain the precise difference between the gloom of Sophocles and the gloom of Theodore Dreiser, making interesting comparisons between the hopelessness of Antigone and of Œdipus, and the hopelessness of "The American Tragedy," with remarks on exactly how effective the human will is in each case. Mr. Babbitt could dilate on the "epileptic bohemians" in "Manhattan Transfer" of whom he complains, and then on adultery, fornication, incest, murder, rape, seduction, and deceit in the plays of Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, which the author of the law of measure greatly admired. And if Mr. Babbitt should remark that in art the subject is nothing and the treatment everything, Mr. Mencken might murmur, "Precisely," or he might suavely inquire the exact shade of difference between looking up words in a Greek dictionary and looking them up in an American one. I think Mr. Mencken and Mr. Babbitt would have a jolly time.

As Mr. Babbitt utters his grand words about tradition and control and general critical intelligence, they take on an hypnotic effect. They become shining perfections somewhere east of Eden to which it would be desirable to return. But in truth no such things exist. Mr. Babbitt is as much of a day-dreamer as Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He wants to return to Buddha and the *bhong* tree, to Socrates and the ilex, not as these things were, but as he romantically imagines them to have been. Like the romanticist, he dreams of a mankind released from the bonds of deterministic naturalism, idling away the happy hours in eloquent discourse of the eternal verities. He is as sentimental as Bernardin de St. Pierre.

There is hopeless confusion in Mr. Babbitt's traditions, could he view them, as he says, "realistically." If the Christian tradition means anything, it means other-worldness; and if the humanist tradition means anything, it means this-worldness, and the twain shall meet but never fuse. Taking no warning from Marsilio Ficino, Mr. Babbitt continues to attempt to coalesce into one magnificent figure Plato and St. Paul, Socrates and Christ, Aristotle—and John Bunyan. Into his naïve world scheme nothing is admitted that is not to his taste. Factors economic, social, biological, psychological, chemical, ethnic, historical, geographical, racial, literary, and artistic condition man's life, but with Mr. Babbitt they do not count. Life as he pre-

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sents it has the simplicity of a child's drawing or of an early map: "Here be Lyons," and here is the Earthly Paradise—at the south pole. In the face of such serene self-assurance, such magnificent disregard of all that is inconvenient to his doctrine, there is nothing to do—except to cross-examine him as he imagines he has cross-examined Mr. Mencken. I wish I had time to.

HOWARD MUMFORD JONES.

Lord Chesterfield and the Graces

The Characters of Lord Chesterfield. Edited with an introduction by Charles Whibley. London: Peter Davies. 2s.

WHEN Lord Mahon edited the letters of Lord Chesterfield, he thought it necessary to warn the intending reader that they are "by no means fitted for early or indiscriminate perusal." Only "those people whose understandings are fixed and whose principles are matured" can, so his Lordship said, read them with impunity. But that was in 1845. And 1845 looks a little faded now. We envisage a house without a bath, where men smoke in the kitchen after the cook has gone to bed, and albums lie on the table, and curtains are very thick, and women are very pure. Naturally, in those days they could not read Lord Chesterfield's letters without blushing; but times have changed, and Mr. Whibley induces us to try.

When the letters begin, Philip Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield's natural son by a Dutch governess, was a little boy of seven. And if we are to make any complaint against the father's moral teaching, it is that the standard is too high for such tender years. "Let us return to oratory, or the art of speaking well; which should never be entirely out of our thoughts," he writes to the boy of seven. "A man can make no figure without it in Parliament, or the Church, or in the law," he continues as if the little boy were already considering his career. It seems, indeed, that the father's fault, if fault it be, is one common to distinguished men who have not themselves succeeded as they should have done; and are determined to give their children—and Philip was an only child—the chances that they have lacked. Indeed, as the letters go on, one may suppose that Lord Chesterfield wrote as much to amuse himself by turning over the stores of his experience, his reading, his knowledge of the world, as to instruct his son. The letters show an eagerness, an animation which prove that to write to Philip was not a task, but a delight. Tired, perhaps, with the duties of office and disillusioned with its disappointments, he takes up his pen, and, in the relief of free communication at last, forgets that his correspondent is, after all, only a schoolboy who cannot understand half the things that his father says to him. But even so, there is nothing to repel us in Lord Chesterfield's preliminary sketch of the unknown world. He is all on the side of moderation, toleration, ratiocination. Never abuse whole bodies of people, he counsels; frequent all churches; laugh at none; inform yourself about all things. Devote your mornings to study, your evenings to good society. Dress as the best people dress; behave as they behave; never be eccentric, egotistical or absent-minded. Observe the laws of proportion, and live every moment to the full. There is even something Greek about it.

So step by step he builds up the figure of the perfect man—the man that Philip may become, he is persuaded, if he will only—and here Lord Chesterfield lets fall the word which is to color his teaching through and through—cultivate the Graces. These ladies are, at first, kept discreetly in the background. It is well that the boy should be indulged in fine sentiments about women and poets to begin with. Lord Chesterfield adjures him to respect them both. "For my own part, I used to think myself in company as much above me, when I was with Mr. Addison and Mr. Pope, as if I had been with all the Princes in Europe," he writes. But as time goes on, the virtues are more and more taken for granted. One need say nothing about morality or religion. They can be left to take care of themselves. But the Graces assume tremendous proportions. The Graces dominate the life of man in this world. Their services cannot for an instant be neglected. And the service is certainly exacting. For consider what it implies—this art of pleasing. To begin with, one must know how to come into a room, and then how to go out again, which, considering the perversity of the human arms and legs, is a matter of considerable dexterity. Then, one must be dressed so that one's clothes seem perfectly fashionable without being new or striking; one's teeth must be perfect; one's wig beyond reproach; one's finger nails cut in the segment of a circle; one must be able to carve, able to dance, and, what is almost as great an art, able to sit gracefully in a chair. These things are the alphabet of the art of pleasing. We now come to speech. It is necessary to speak at least three languages to perfection. But before we open our lips, we must be on our guard never to laugh. Lord Chesterfield himself never laughed. He always smiled. When, at length, the young man speaks, he must avoid all proverbs and vulgar expressions; he must enunciate clearly and use perfect grammar; he must not argue; he must not tell stories; he must not talk about himself. Then, at last, the young man may begin to practise the finest of the arts of pleasing—the art of flattery. For every man and every woman has some prevailing vanity. Watch; wait; pry; seek out their weakness, "and you will then know what to bait your hook with to catch them." And if you succeed, you will rise in the world.

At this point, if it were our part to warn the reader, we should add an expostulatory note, as Lord Mahon does when the Earl airs his views on love. We should, at least, beg the reader to have his wits about him. For what is to be the prize of this endless effort and self-abnegation? What do we gain when we have learnt to come into rooms and to go out again; to pry into people's secrets; to hold our tongues and to flatter and to forsake the society of low-born people, which corrupts, and the society of clever people, which perverts? What is the prize which is to reward us? It is simply that we shall rise in the world. Press for a further definition, and it amounts, perhaps, to this: one will be popular with the best people. But if we are so exacting as to demand who the best people are, we become involved in a labyrinth from which there is no returning. Nothing exists in itself. What is good society? It is the society that the best people believe to be good. What is wit? It is what the best people think to be witty. All value depends upon the somebodies else's opinion. For it is the essence of this philosophy that things have no independent existence, but live only in the eyes of other people. It is a looking-glass world this, to which we climb so slowly; and its prizes are all reflections. That may account for our baffled feeling as we shuffle and shuffle vainly among these urbane pages for something hard to lay our hands upon. Hardness is the last thing we shall find. But, granted the deficiency, how much that is ignored by

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sterner moralists is here seized upon, and who shall deny, at least while Lord Chesterfield's enchantment is upon him, that these imponderable qualities have their value and these shining Graces have their radiance? Consider for a moment what the Graces have done for their devoted servant the Earl.

Here is a disillusioned politician, who is prematurely aged, who has lost his office, who is losing his teeth, who, worst fate of all, is growing deafer day by day. Yet he never allows a groan to escape him. He is never dull; he is never boring; he is never slovenly. His mind is as well groomed as his body. Never for a second does he "welter in an easy chair." Private though these letters are, and apparently spontaneous, they play with such ease in and about the single subject which absorbs them, that it never becomes tedious, or, what is still more remarkable, never becomes ridiculous. It may be that the art of pleasing has some connection with the art of writing. To be polite, considerate, controlled, to sink one's egotisms, to conceal rather than to obtrude one's personality may profit the writer even as they profit the man of fashion.

Certainly, there is much to be said in favor of the training, however we define it, which helped Lord Chesterfield to write his characters. The little papers have the precision and formality of some old-fashioned minuet. Yet the symmetry is so natural to the artist that he can break it where he likes; it never becomes pinched and formal, as it would in the hands of an imitator. He can be sly; he can be witty; he can be sententious, but never, for an instant, does he lose his sense of time, and when the tune is over he calls a halt. Here the eighteenth century, of course, came to his help. Lord Chesterfield, though he was polite to everything, even to the stars and Bishop Berkeley's philosophy, firmly refused, as became a son of his age, to dally with infinity or to suppose that things are not quite as solid as they seem. The world was good enough and the world was big enough as it was. This prosaic temper, while it keeps within the bounds of impeccable common sense, limits his outlook. No single phrase of his reverberates or penetrates as so many of La Bruyère's do. But he would have been the first to deprecate any comparison with that great writer; besides, to write as La Bruyère wrote, one must perhaps believe in something, and then, how difficult to observe the Graces! One might perhaps laugh; one might perhaps cry.

But while we amuse ourselves with this brilliant nobleman and his views of life, we are aware, and the letters owe much of their fascination to this consciousness, of a dumb yet substantial figure on the further side of the page. Philip Stanhope is always there. It is true that he says nothing, but we feel his presence in Dresden, in Berlin, in Paris, opening the letters and poring over them and looking dolefully at the thick packets which have been accumulating year after year since he was a child of seven. He had grown into a rather serious, rather stout, rather short young man. He had a taste for foreign politics. A little serious reading was rather to his liking. And by every post the letters come, urbane, polished, brilliant, imploring and commanding him to learn to dance, to learn to carve, to consider the management of his legs and to seduce a lady of fashion. He did his best. He worked very hard at the Graces; but their service was too exacting. He sat down half-way up the steep stairs which lead to the glittering hall with all the mirrors. He could not do it. He failed in the House of Commons; he subsided into some small post in Ratisbon; he died untimely. He left it to his widow to break the news which he had lacked heart or courage to tell his father—that he had been married all these years to a lady of low birth, who had borne him children.

The Earl took the blow like a gentleman. His letter to his daughter-in-law is a model of urbanity. He began the education of his grandson. But he seems to have become a little indifferent to what became of him after that. He did not care greatly if he lived or died. But still, to the very end he cared for the Graces. His last words were a tribute of respect to them. Someone came into the room when he was dying, and with his last breath, he roused himself to order a chair.

VIRGINIA WOOLF.

The New History

A History of American Life. Edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger and Dixon Ryan Fox. Ashley H. Thorndike and Carl Becker, Consulting Editors. New York: The Macmillan Company. Twelve Vols. $4 each.

The First Americans, 1607-1690, by Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker. 358 pages.

Provincial Society, 1690-1763, by James Truslow Adams. 374 pages.

The Rise of the Common Man, 1830-1850, by Carl Russell Fish. 391 pages.

The Emergence of Modern America, 1865-1878, by Allan Nevins. 446 pages.

MUCH attention has been devoted in recent years to the discussion of the so-called "new history," namely, that type of historical writing which has: (1) abandoned the political, military and diplomatic obsession, as well as satisfaction with mere narrative and description; and (2) devoted ever greater attention to tracing the evolution of culture and the genesis of institutions, and to interpreting the significance of such historical processes. Among those who have done the most to define and defend this innovation in historical procedure, men like Lamprecht, Berr, Croce, Robinson and Teggart would unquestionably be accorded a leading place.

Not so long ago, Professor Carl Becker offered the excellent suggestion that, while it is a good thing to write about what the new history should be, an even more commendable procedure would be to advance the cause by turning out more work in harmony with the tenets of the new school. Of course, he did not mean to deny that much of significance had already been done along this line by such writers as Lamprecht, Gothein, Goetz, Ferrero, Rambaud, Altamira, Marvin, Green, Maitland, McMaster, Turner, Oberholtzer and many others. Indeed, Professor Becker himself has been one of the most distinguished of the pioneers, in a series of books as notable for originality of thought as for finish of style.

The past year has been one of signal importance in the realization of the new history, for in Beard's "Rise of American Civilization" we have the most notable product of this school which has been executed single-handed. The composite work under review, edited by Professors Schlesinger and Fox, represents a coöperative enterprise with the same general aim, but on a far greater scale and, hence, all the more significant for historiography and for popular education. It is no exaggeration to describe "The History of American Life" as the most impressive vindication of the methods and objectives of the new history which has yet come to light. Henceforth, no one can contend that the new history is but the compensatory doctrinal phan-

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tasy or wish-fulfillment of those too languid or indolent to perspire and cerebrate sufficiently to produce a monograph on the strategy of Windischgrätz or the genesis of the Privy Council.

It is undoubtedly preferable to devote a considerable portion of this review to a description of the enterprise as a whole, thus providing the background for noting the remaining eight volumes, as they will appear within the next year or so. There are obviously two ways in which a history of American civilization might be executed: (1) the division of the subject into special fields, such as social development, art, religion, economic life and the like, with a volume or so devoted to each phase; or (2) a survey of American life as a whole in sequential chronological cross-sections. The latter method has been followed here, and it is undoubtedly the preferable procedure, if one desires to emphasize cultural evolution and institutional genesis.

Twelve volumes are allotted to the undertaking. The first one, by Professor Herbert I. Priestley, will be devoted to exploration, discovery and the Spanish settlements. This covers the whole sweep from 1492 to 1819. Then follow eleven volumes which describe American culture as it has developed in successive periods. The chronological allotment to each volume grows progressively less as American culture becomes more dynamic and complex. The second volume in the series, that by Professor Wertenbaker, presents our cultural evolution between 1607 and 1690, while the last two volumes, by Professors Faulkner and Slosson, attempt to portray our national development for only sixteen and thirteen years respectively. The dominating purposes and concepts which have governed the editors in planning and executing the work as a whole are well revealed in their own words in the prospectus of the series:

> This pioneer series of volumes penetrates a relatively new field of American history, a great field which has been known in many of its parts but, unmapped on any such scale, has seemed a wilderness of unrelated facts. It is the purpose of this series to present both for the historian and for the general reader the story of our civilization from its far-off beginnings to the present moment; to show how Europeans became Americans, how farmers, fishermen, planters, merchants and the rest grew rich or poor, how they organized their common life, how they built their common interests into institutions—churches, schools, and all those multifarious social enterprises which in total make the substance of civilization. . . .
>
> Social history has lacked synthesis; the editorial design of this series makes at least a start in that direction. The *transit of civilization* from the Old World to the New has been constantly within the authors' contemplation, and the reader under their guidance sees as in a slow dissolving picture the ceaseless action of this environment upon imported custom, a study in that tremendous social chemistry whose principles have been so little understood. On the other hand, the original factors in American life, sprung from our own soil, are steadily observed in *social evolution*. . . .
>
> In the actual presentation it is a moving picture of panoramic sweep but one where breadth is not attained at the expense of particularity, composition or perspective. "Close-ups" of individuals at work or at play continually reassure the reader that he has here an intimately human story and not a speculative, theorized "interpretation," thinly stocked with evidence. . . .
>
> The authors are always seeking *explanation* of the phenomena they discover and present, either from contemporary philosophers and litterateurs or from the logic of the facts themselves; but in their richly furnished narratives the reader finds the concrete evidence and instances needed to sustain their judgments. Mere antiquarianism they avoid; quaint, curious and picturesque as much of their matter fortunately is, they have selected it mainly for the light it throws upon the process of American life. Factional rivalry, party strife and statecraft, which after all have never been an important personal concern of many people, have been left to the political historians, but fundamental matters like the broadening of the suffrage, the democratizing of political control through conventions and the like, and such expressions of the public conscience as movements for "reform" are all given due attention. The "economic interpretation" has been found inadequate for American life as a whole; those responsible for this series prefer to trace it in terms of social evolution.

The selection of the personnel to execute this praiseworthy and magisterial enterprise has been as happy as the project is laudable and original. As students of Professors Robinson, Shotwell, Beard and Shepherd, the editors of the series received their training in the very citadel of the new history, while as members of the seminar of Herbert L. Osgood they were taught the methods of research by the greatest master who has ever turned his hand to the field of American history. Both Professors Schlesinger and Fox have subsequently, through independent publications, afforded ample proof that the extraordinary opportunities in the days of their historical apprenticeship were in no sense wasted. In the roll of collaborators we find names which give us advance assurance as to the quality of the product: Priestley, Wertenbaker, Adams, Greene, Fish, Cole, Nevins, Tarbell, Faulkner and Slosson.

In such space as remains we may briefly characterize the four volumes now in hand. Professor Wertenbaker treats of the first century of American settlement in America. The major theme of his work is the transit of English life and customs to America and the beginnings of that process of modification which ultimately resulted in the creation of an American people and the American Revolution. The second important conception developed is the original similarity in social types and economic ambitions as between the settlers in the North and the South, which later gave way to growing divergence, due to different geographical and economic factors, and ended in producing the Civil War. Incidental to this part of his book, Professor Wertenbaker offers the results of his monographic study of colonial Virginian society, so disastrous to the thesis that Virginia was originally settled by a group of aristocratic "F. F. V.'s" who were lineal descendants of King Arthur and at once carved out for themselves magnificent baronial estates of five thousand acres and upwards. He finds that in colonial Virginia there were but three families which were descended from "English houses of historic note" and three more from the minor gentry of England. His picture of the all-pervading supernaturalism, the religious bigotry, the minute sumptuary control of life, and cruel punishments of colonial days, particularly in New England, can be recommended to those who deplore these godless times and long for the sterling qualities and rude virtues of ancestral days. By and large, however, the chief service rendered by Professor Wertenbaker's book is the forceful portrayal of American origins against the European background.

Mr. James Truslow Adams, by his three great books on New England origins, has already established himself, along with Osgood and Andrews, as one of the unmatched trio of American historians who have thus far devoted themselves to the colonial period. In his contribution to this series, which deals with the period from 1690 to the eve of the American Revolution, Mr. Adams maintains the same high

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level of achievement which characterized his earlier writings. Rarely have complete mastery of the relevant facts been so happily combined with intelligent organization of materials and lucidity of expression. The work makes clear the new developments in the age following the era described by Professor Wertenbaker. The growing prosperity in commerce, agriculture and frontier enterprise tended to create the beginnings of the American aristocracy of wealth and of the materialistic spirit which has since characterized American civilization. The wealthy aristocracy, even though poverty-stricken from twentieth-century standards, laid the foundations of American comforts and material culture, but the lot of the common man improved only slightly during the colonial period. The divergence of the sections steadily increased as the South definitely adopted a slave-holding economy and New England turned more and more towards commercial pursuits. Race mixture and cultural contrasts grew apace with the coming of the Scotch-Irish and the Germanic groups. Indigenous learning made some headway, partly as an outgrowth of the need of training people to read and expound the Scriptures and partly as a product of the increasing wealth and leisure. The crasser type of supernaturalism was gradually mitigated, due to the reaction upon America of the European scientific progress and the rationalistic spirit of criticism in England.

There is a gap of two volumes between the book by Mr. Adams and the work of Professor Carl Russell Fish, who surveys the movement for democracy, social reform and education in the middle of the last century. The intervening volumes by Professors Greene and Fox will tell the story of the winning of national independence and will trace the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution and westward expansion, all essential as the background of the Jacksonian age and after. The present controversy over the nature and adequacy of a democratic way of life and political organization makes Professor Fish's volume peculiarly timely. His book brings out clearly the enormous differences in scientific and sociological knowledge, in political experience and in social conditions as between Jackson's day and our own. A recognition of this fact is indispensable to any fair and competent judgment of the democratic dogmas and aspirations. Men of 1830 cannot fairly be condemned for the deficiencies of a system of thought and practice formulated prior to our contemporary knowledge of man and society and out of social and cultural conditions markedly different from our own. At the same time, there is little reason for our stubbornly determining to adhere to a set of hopes and dogmas scientifically on a par with phrenology and culturally compatible with the log-cabin and the stage-coach. Professor Fish portrays the age which, for the first time, set out to make America a democratic society and was determined to end aristocratic privilege and social oppression among the white Americans. It was an epoch characterized, as none before or since in this country, by the obsessions of equality, optimism, idealism, enthusiasm, and confidence in the future, as well as in man's capacity to determine the nature of that future. Next to democracy, the outstanding article of faith in that era was the trust in popular education. Much that was good was unquestionably accomplished in the way of humanitarian reform, but the experience of the period raises the crucial question as to whether there can be any real or sound moral progress which is not based on the relevant scientific facts. Professor Fish calls attention to the remarkable diversity of culture in the United States at the time, and to the developing antipathy of the sections which presaged the coming of the Civil War. The author's attitude toward this stage of our history is commendable. He may be called "sympathetic," yet he has departed far from the Pollyanna enthusiasm and approval of Bancroft.

Professor Nevins' volume is entitled, with high propriety, "The Emergence of Modern America." It is a masterly account of the generally neglected and often unsuspected economic and social revolution which came in the generation after 1860. It will be somewhat less striking since the appearance of Professor Beard's second volume, which developed this theme with great effectiveness, but Professor Nevins has much more space at his disposal to characterize the period, and he achieves what is veritably an incomparable description and analysis. He does well to emphasize that, after all, the era from 1865 to 1878 was far more significant in an economic and social way than it was from the standpoint of politics and constitutional law, something which the student would never have suspected in reading Burgess, and scarcely even from a perusal of Dunning. The editors point with justifiable pride to the fact that Professor Nevins does not once refer to either Thaddaeus Stevens or Charles Sumner. He also tends to minimize the economic damage done to the South by the brutal congressional Reconstruction. This is all undoubtedly a valuable corrective, with which the reviewer is thoroughly sympathetic, but it can be overdone. Just what is most needed now, aside from emphasizing the economic revolution, is to rehabilitate and vindicate Andrew Johnson and to expose relentlessly the nefarious doings of Charles Sumner, Thad Stevens, Ben Wade, Ben Butler and the rest of that gang of ruffians who substituted their savagery for the wisdom of Lincoln, Seward and Johnson. In treating of the economic and social transformation, Professor Nevins not only deals with the industrial progress, but also with the developments in high finance, the progress in transportation, the settlement of the West, and the accompanying political corruption in nation, city and state. His account of the revulsion of popular feeling in the face of the relatively petty political thefts of the Grant administrations will not make pleasant reading for those who might be driven to reflect that, when the infinitely greater debauch of the Harding administration was revealed, the only man who came within the shadow of Atlanta was Senator Wheeler, who led in exposing the scandals, while Harding's associate was triumphantly borne into the White House on an avalanche of popular approval. But Professor Nevins does not overwork the unsavory political record of that time, and in three notable chapters on American culture and humanitarian movements in this era he reveals substantial progress in decency and enlightenment.

One word in conclusion: in the same way as Freeman is said to have remarked that Green's history would have been all right if he had cut out the "social stuff," so many of our most distinguished and solemn protectors of the prestige and honor of Clio will remark that the Schlesinger-Fox enterprise is all right in its way and interesting enough, but that it is, after all, not "history." We hope that the editors will arch their backs and defend the position that it is not only history but exactly what history ought to be, in so far as the problem of proportion is concerned. The reviewer, indeed, regrets that it was entitled "A History of American Life." It should have been defiantly and confidently designated "A History of the United States." Its content is exactly what a general history of the United States should embody. If one wants more of warfare, politics and diplomacy, he should seek it, not in departments of history, but in the historical sections of departments of political science, jurisprudence and international relations, and in the R. O. T. C. HARRY ELMER BARNES.

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Heroic Isadora

My Life, by Isadora Duncan. New York: Boni and Liveright. 359 pages. $5.

ISADORA DUNCAN says that her first memory was of a fire, and that her art and her life were born of the sea. Her life was indeed like a force of nature in its primitive energy and strength, like a flame, a wind, a tide flowing and retreating across all the countries of the world. This daughter of the western ocean, whose first knowledge of the movements of the dance came from the jig of an Irish grandmother who had crossed the plains in a prairie wagon, left everywhere behind her—in America, in France, in Germany, in Russia, in Greece—images of Eternal Woman. Subjective yet universal images: the chaste and lovely dancing maiden; the *grande amoureuse,* lover and beloved of all men; the mænad, hurling her knees upward to the tune of the world's despair and revolution; the mother rejoicing and abundant, surrounded by joyous children; the mother sorrowing and bereft, smitten by a cruel fate and driven ever after, bent in a veil of tears and lamentation.

These are Isadora, legendary already as Sappho, or Helen of Troy, or Duse, a creature who, for all her earthly passions, seems to live in a dream, to move to the most lyrical and stern rhythms of the world's great music, to live in her own body—she has said it here—"like a spirit in a cloud."

The reality she was ever seeking was not compatible with the reality of the world about her, with the reality of America or even the reality of Greece. When the clan Duncan raised a Greek temple of their own in sight of the Parthenon, they chose a waterless spot, they left their temple unfinished for eternity to be occupied by wandering goats, instead of by a great cult and school of the dance. This universal revivifying school, of which Isadora dreamed as the essence of her life's work, never quite came into being. Like her love adventures, it was always beginning with high hope and always ending in a conflict. When she seemed on the point of victory, when she adopted forty children and planned to adopt thousands, when she chartered hotels to lodge them, world wars, universal calamities intervened. The bubble of her dream was always bursting in her hands. Yet this very perishing became in her art a beauty and an inspiration. This very incompleteness stands like the symbol of the need of every great artist to create a spiritual and abstract beauty above and beyond nature.

And it is the curious quality of imagination, fatality, ecstasy, doom behind them that transformed Isadora's perishing loves into a kind of heroic legend of love. The artists who shared them were in a sense brothers as well as lovers; they, too, were driven by the same lacks, the same withdrawals into a world that must apparently be held sacred from too great dependence on human ties. Her affair with Gordon Craig, which shines out as the central experience, was emphatically of this dreamlike sort. Here were two life works, struggling in the grip of a single love. The end was separation, but from this union came Isadora's eldest child, Deirdre, born in terrible suffering on the shores of the North Sea. We ask ourselves as we read the story whether these lovers ever existed, whether their child was ever born and ever died in a terrible motor accident with her little half-brother Patrick, the child of "Lohengrin," the millionaire. Perhaps the whole legend is the strange invention of some poet.

Isadora Duncan found the average male creature frankly boring. She tells at the end of the book of her first contact with a "man of action," Gordon Selfridge:

> I was amazed how different an outlook on life he had—he might almost have been of another sex, for I suppose all my lovers had been decidedly feminine. I had also always had the companionship of men who were more or less neurasthenic, who were either sunk in deepest gloom or buoyed up to sudden life by drink. I had never realized that anyone could find life in itself a pleasant thing.

For the non-artistic reader, if such there be, this paragraph should serve as a key to the life of the clan Duncan: the life of a family of artists for whom the bourgeois world exists only as a sort of obstruction or convenience. Isadora, who was brought up to cajole the ever unpaid butcher out of a steak, seemed to the end of her life to take a wicked delight in departing from a hotel leaving her invaluable and valueless Greek tunics in the hands of an irate proprietor. Money was something to be made, to be borrowed or begged as the case might be, but above all something to be spent with a lavish hand and no thought for the morrow.

The family of four children, Augustin, Raymond, Elizabeth and Isadora, grew up like wild creatures by a lovely sea, nourished on music and poetry, pushed by their mother's restless and beautiful spirit to turn to art rather than to practical life. The mother was a music teacher, divorced from her husband. Isadora was glad of the poverty of her childhood: "the finest inheritance you can give to a child is to make its own way on its own feet." At the age of six she was found teaching babies to wave their arms in unison. At the age of ten she had discarded education, put up her hair, and begun to teach dancing. At eleven she felt her first passion—for a chemist: "I have never since ceased to be madly in love." At twelve she resolved to fight for women's freedom, for their right to live and have children out of wedlock. There was no discipline in our lives, she said: we were all very emotional and refused to be repressed.

When the father gave them a comfortable home for a time, Augustin set up a theater in the barn, and, to make a beard for an actor, cut out a piece of the parlor carpet. What is a carpet for? Some might say to warm the feet, or cover the floor, but the Duncans said to make a beard of. What is an apartment for? Not a place to sleep or eat in comfort. The clan Duncan for years were denuded of all comfort. Their mattresses, if they had them, were kept in carved chests: the important thing was that Isadora should have a place to dance.

Isadora was the central figure, the courage, the motor, the genius of the clan. At a tender age she told a ballet master that his art was ugly and against nature. Revolting against the narrow conditions of California life, sure already of her destiny, learning from books what Europe might mean to an artist, she got the clan all headed eastward. When she and her mother, who backed her blindly, reached Chicago, they knew hunger; but Isadora reached Daly the manager, she lectured him to his vast amazement on the subject of the ancient dance, and secured a promise of a New York engagement. So the clan, telegraphing for funds, proceeded to New York, where, behind the scenes in Ada Rehan's company, Isadora read Marcus Aurelius to alleviate the misery of existence. But she met Ethelbert Nevin, danced to his music, and after a canvassing of millionaire's wives, the clan moved on to London, where they began in passionate delight to haunt museums, and

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were surprised to find themselves soon homeless on the street.

It was, of course, ordained that Mrs. Patrick Campbell should discover Isadora dancing in a public garden, that she should meet Charles Hallé, that she should, with her family, move on to Paris, where in a miserable studio Mrs. Duncan played the piano all day and all night, while Isadora danced and drew into her naïve maiden orbit André Beaunier, Rodin, Carrière; exactly the influences she needed, men who regarded her youth and her art with a sort of religious veneration. Always and everywhere she drank up the genius of striving artists and was in turn drained like a cup of magic wine.

All this time her love affairs had been purely of the spirit, essentially lyrical and romantic. Such affairs continued to the end of her life. But when she heard gypsy music for the first time, when she met "Romeo" in Hungary, she became aware of her body as "something other than an instrument to express the sacred harmonies of music." Romeo, however, asked for a wife who would sit in a stage box to applaud Hamlet; Isadora retired to read Kant and drink a glass of milk, to work out in her art new movements and theories. Again, at the very hour her managers were beginning to offer high prices, the clan Duncan decided to go to Greece in a sailing boat, repeating as far as possible the voyage of Ulysses. They did not return until the pressure for funds was extreme, bringing with them a chorus of Greek boys, soon to be sent home in disgrace—another broken dream. But never mind, something new and marvelous lay ahead. The temple of Bayreuth would obliterate the temple of Greece.

The story, which moved on to great fame and glory, cannot be repeated in a review. Isadora herself laments that it cannot be told in a single book. What woman has told the truth of her life? And am I one woman or hundreds, she asks? And how can I, who have spent years to find the truth of a single movement, tell this story in words which have also their pattern, their art? An *ex parte* story it is, like all autobiographies, but told with a disarming generosity, simplicity and humor and a swift directness of narrative. Can a woman write of her lovers? Only perhaps if she still loves them, and Isadora had the illusion—was it that?—that she was ever faithful, ever deserted. Her portraits, not only of her lovers, but of her friends like Stanislavsky, D'Annunzio, Duse, and many more have an extraordinary vitality and significance.

Why is the result of my life so tragic, in spite of my success? she cries at one point. Perhaps because she was at the bottom a Puritan mystic, always striving after the heroic expression. Rousseau, Nietzsche, Whitman, Beethoven, Wagner were her masters. Perhaps because, behind this ephemeral life and love, these moments of fleeting beauty, was a terrible physical and human urge for the permanent ties of motherhood. It seemed that everything she loved, the school which would have given a sublimating expression to this joyous motherhood, and to her dream of beauty, and even the children of her own flesh and blood, must be taken from her. It seems that it is dangerous, perhaps forbidden, for that inhuman creature, the great woman artist, the breaker of laws, to think of human happiness in terms of daily life. But we are grateful to her for her supreme courage, her willingness to engage herself to the full with those conflicting powers of darkness and light that stand on either side of the artist. There seemed even some tragic rightness in her death, on the shores of the Mediterranean, from the entanglement of her Greek scarf with a modern machine.

ELIZABETH SHEPLEY SERGEANT.

Beyond Imagism

The Bare Hills, by Yvor Winters. Boston: The Four Seas Company. 62 pages. $2.

POEMS by Mr. Yvor Winters have been appearing for several years in the little magazines, and he has previously published, in pamphlet form, two collections of verse, which acquire a certain interest in the light of the mature style of the present volume. There is always a variety of reasons why certain gifted poets are not immediately taken up. Mr. Winters' case, however, is somewhat special. His poetry occupies an anomalous position, and his limited public fame may be set down to a single cause—the fact that Mr. Winters is starting out as an Imagist some years after the decline of the publicity that accompanied the movement of that name. The circumstance is a little unfortunate for Mr. Winters. But because of the small amount of distinguished verse left by the official Imagists, it is more unfortunate for them.

The Imagist program of the last decade was one of the most ambitious ever made public by a generation of poets. If Mr. Pound were not constitutionally unable to think, it would never have been conceived. Its main idea, which remained negative to the last, was the rejection of a worn-out system of metaphor, with its accompanying patterns of rhythm, that had come down from the nineteenth century. In a sense, of course, the quality of any poetry depends upon the extent to which the poet re-creates his language. But the Imagists were going to make a new language—with a manifesto. They failed. And they failed because language is not merely vocabulary. They failed because a poetry of the image (could it exist) reduces to the parallel exercise of five separate instruments—the five senses—which cannot, without violence done to the first principle of Imagism, be integrated. For Imagism, as it was set forth in the official dogma, contained its own contradiction. It held out for the fresh visualization of objects—that is to say, for the creation of metaphor—but it ignored the total vision, the imagination, by means of which the raw perceptions are bound together into a whole. The Imagists' poetry lacked meaning; though some of their work, the early poems, for example, of Mr. John Gould Fletcher, achieved a kind of success with the merely pictorial and decorative possibilities of the image.

Much of Winters' poetry hobbles along on the necessary limitation of the Imagist technique. But he has cleared up the problem so intelligently that he knows just how far the method will take him; he is perfectly sure; there is no mixed intention. He puts down on the page, in all seriousness, a phrase or a single line, and calls it a poem. Such mistakes betray an intense interest in the properties of the phrase, and the result, in the poems, is a classical precision of statement, a kind of naked elegance, which no other contemporary poet commands:

> dazed and shrill
> the white-lipped boy
> now faces the red sun
> and cries the news.

But Winters does more than the Imagists could do. His poetry rests upon the bare structure of images, but they are arranged so that the "over-statement" usually emerges. This indispensable effect Miss Lowell could seldom manage, and her poetry is rather dry. But Winters keeps the progression of his images quite linear, broken and distinct; while most of the old Imagist poetry was an inert

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mass of confused sensation. And when the structure of metaphor becomes involved and interwoven, the poet must have the genius for direct and unifying assertion, or the poem will fall apart. Winters has this gift. The poems at the end of the book exceed the Imagist program; the images are involved, piled one upon another. But Winters, to meet the new condition, knows what to do. He binds together the materials of his vision in direct statements. He can go still further in that direction, but at present there is no writing in contemporary poetry more certain of itself, or purer in diction, than the close of "Prayer beside a Lamp":

> The steady courage
> of the humming oil drives back the
> darkness as I drive back sweating death:
> from out a body stricken by this thought, I
> watch the night grow turgid on the stair—
> I, crumbling, in the crumbling brain of man.

For Mr. Winters sees poetry as a discipline, and his equipment for it is probably, among the men of his decade, the soundest in this country.

ALLEN TATE.

George Washington

George Washington: the Rebel and the Patriot, 1762-1777, by Rupert Hughes. New York: William Morrow and Company. 694 pages. $5.

George Washington, Colonial Traveller, 1732-1775, by John C. Fitzpatrick. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 416 pages. $5.

The Estate of George Washington, Deceased, by Eugene E. Prussing. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 512 pages. $6.

Washington Speaks for Himself, by Lucretia Perry Osborn. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 323 pages. $3.50.

A History of the Life and Death, Virtues and Exploits of General George Washington, by Parson Weems. New York: Macy-Masius. 374 pages. $2.50.

THE recent flood of books on Lincoln has been followed by another flood, no less variegated and marked by as many works, distinguished and undistinguished, on the First President. It has been a long time since the bronze image of the faultless and immaculate hero was removed from its pedestal, melted down by a series of realistic biographers and recast in smaller forms that evoke the genuine likeness of the soldier, the statesman and the man; but Mr. Rupert Hughes' biography, to be completed in four volumes, of which the second has just appeared, promises to become, for some time at least, the standard portrait of the leader of the Revolution. A few years ago the difficulty was to make Washington merely interesting, for the classical conception of the man corresponded with some need in his countrymen's mind, and people were unwilling to hear of a Washington who was in any substantial respects like unto other men. But as his papers were studied more closely, as the expurgated documents were supplanted by the unexpurgated versions, as a more tolerant and receptive attitude of mind developed in the population at large, the real figure began to emerge, and it became apparent that Washington was indeed the most human of men, "pitiful, heartbroken, tragic, gay, witty, tender, gracious, tactful, fearless, ferocious, heroic, and, at his loftiest, sublime," as Mr. Hughes says, as well as surprisingly "emotional, bewildered and sensitive." Mr. Hughes has delved far and wide for his material. The list of his authorities and the works he has examined covers nine pages of small print, and his references reveal a truly astonishing industry and care.

This second volume of Washington's life covers the fifteen years immediately preceding the Revolution, together with the first two years of the war, the years during which Washington was learning the art of the soldier and undergoing his apprenticeship for the great tasks that marked the latter part of his life. These were naturally the years that revealed most clearly the weaknesses of the man, his efforts and struggles, and the developing faculties that formed the complete figure of his mature period; and Mr. Hughes has succeeded admirably in so painting him as to bring out the picture of the floundering, wavering, melancholy, hoping and finally emerging hero. "The more one studies Washington's passionate life and tempestuous letters," says Mr. Hughes, "the more amazing it is that he should have become a legend of marble serenity, of unmoved and undespairing confidence, the great 'silent, unwavering' man of godlike calm." And this is indeed true, whether we see him in New York, at the outset of the Revolution, slashing with his sword his own retreating officers and men and inviting the enemy's bullets in a despairing hope of being killed himself, overcome in his misery with a surge of homesickness for Mount Vernon, or, previously, struggling to build, out of the most unpromising materials, an army and a navy, or, again, in his purely personal aspect, solicitously conducting his stepson, Jacky Custis, to King's College in New York, or agonizing over the epileptic attacks and terrible death at sixteen of the charming Patsy: an "infinitely pathetic, lonely figure," as Mr. Hughes finds him, "wretchedly afraid of himself," shy, embarrassed and with no ambitions save "to grow rich, be free, cultivate his farm and his friends, his charities and the other charms of this world, and leave behind him an honorable name."

Especially notable in Mr. Hughes' narrative is the wealth of intimate material dealing with Washington's private life, his household at Mount Vernon, which was "both a tavern of hospitality and a hospital," his habits as a country gentleman, meticulous about the clothes he ordered from London, the objects of art which he also ordered, "busts of his heroes, Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, Charles XII of Sweden and the King of Prussia, two wild beasts, and sundry small ornaments for the chimneypiece," in his endeavor to create a stately mansion and live up to the standard expected of the consort of Martha, the "richest woman in Virginia," his dealings with his horses, the laziness of his slaves and the shiftlessness of his workpeople, while, occupied with these domestic affairs and the cultivation of the farm that was his lifelong passion, he ignored the wars that were raging in the Colonies and devoted himself to his wife, to hunting foxes and fishing and to his country neighbors. So careful with his accounts that he kept his books posted, the books that contained the record of the greatest fortune in America, up to within two or three days of his death, equally careful in the posting of the diary that contained the daily record of his churchgoings and his visits, the mutations of the weather, the planting of seeds, the work of his slaves, his winnings and losses at cards, he was very slow in entering politics or taking any part in public life. A many-sided man, "he loved the world and the things of the world, the manure as well as the flowers, the breeding of animals and crops, the

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gamble of horse-race and card-game, as well as the conquest of the wilderness and the clash of armies; the vivacity of beautiful women dancing and well dressed men paying courtesy to one another, as well as he loved freedom and prosperity and etiquette among nations," and the only topic he never mentioned was his sins: "If he ever prayed, he never said so. One searches his diaries in vain for those soul-searchings and grovellings and condemnations of secret sins that fill so many other journals." But he said once to Louis Philippe, when the latter was in exile in this country: "I have never repented any sins because I have committed no sins." No sins, that is, save those that were the commonplace of a country gentleman of his time. These private records were so numerous that nobody living, says Mr. Hughes, has ever even counted them. They are estimated to number between 26,000 and 40,000 separate manuscripts, and nobody knows how many more are in private hands or lying undiscovered in old bundles, old trunks and unvisited attics. Hunting buffaloes in Ohio was almost his only divagation from the routine of the Southern landholder, though he did this to such effect that he has often been called the Father of the West. His awakening to the larger interests of the country was slow, and it was not until 1774 that he first entered the Virginia Assembly.

Mr. Hughes' narrative is as remote as possible in manner from the formal biography either of the long-winded, old-fashioned type or of the succinct modern type. It is a flowing story, told in brief paragraphs and with a rapid movement, marked everywhere with picturesque detail and, albeit with no distinction of phrase, lightly and always happily conducted. It is admirably supplemented by Mrs. Osborn's compilation, "Washington Speaks for Himself." This is a chronologically arranged selection from Washington's journals, diaries, letters, addresses and war and state papers, revealing and describing his life in his own words. "On most if not all important points in his career," says Mrs. Osborn, "he has spoken for himself, and the closer we come to him, through a study of his own words, the more we are impressed with the mental and moral greatness of the man, to whom no historian has as yet done full justice." We see him here commenting on his family and ancestry, his life as a young officer and assemblyman, through all the phases of the Revolution and subsequent peace, his presidency and closing years, as well as in his special interests, education, the army and navy, emigration, agriculture and the Federal City. The book is virtually an autobiography and a vivid one. Beside it, and beside Mr. Hughes' distinguished narrative, Parson Weems' famous "History" is a curiosity indeed. Written in the most florid eighteenth-century manner, it is, however, notable in two respects: first, for the vivacity of the anecdotes of Washington's early life, the most celebrated of which is the story of the cherry-tree, and secondly for the gusto of the battle-scenes. Indeed, the unflagging enthusiasm with which the whole book is written redeems it as a work of some enduring interest, in spite of its altogether uncritical tone.

Side by side with this lively work, the compilations of Messrs. Prussing and Fitzpatrick are, however useful, necessarily dull. "The Estate of George Washington, Deceased" is an immense work, with many illustrations, dealing with Washington's last will and testament, the story of the administration of his estate, his executors, and the beneficiaries, purposes and property of the First President, who was also, thanks to the skill and assiduity with which he increased and multiplied the estate his wife brought him, the richest citizen of the country in his time. "George Washington, Colonial Traveller" is a compilation of Washington's diaries, with other interpolated and hitherto unpublished material, telling the story, in a series of bare entries, of Washington's life from his birth to 1775, covering his adventures in the French and Indian War, his life at Mount Vernon and his experience in the West. These two books are scarcely for the average reader, but they are valuable additions to the general library of Washingtoniana, and will prove useful as source-books for later writers who are skilled in the art of preparing literature out of just such unpromising raw material as this.

VAN WYCK BROOKS.

Christopher Morley

The Haverford Edition of the Books of Christopher Morley. New York: Doubleday, Page and Company. Twelve vols. $60.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY has hitherto received very little serious critical attention. Yet in the broader critical sense, he is certainly not negligible. Now that his publishers have brought out his collected works, it may perhaps be useful to review his achievement.

In reading his essays, it is difficult and perhaps impossible to regard Morley the writer without becoming distracted by Morley the man, who is constantly bounding like a Bandersnatch across our vision and confusing the focus. It has always been one of the tricks of the personal essayist to take the reader to his bosom; to prattle winningly of his little fads and crotchets; but it is a dangerous trick to attempt, for if we are not immediately won, we are apt to feel that the attempt itself was an impertinence. The writer must always overcome his reader, in one way or another; must overcome a lazy, if not actually a hostile, indifference on the reader's part. "His [Morley's] pose of an ancient hearty," says Mr. Canby, "may deceive the uninitiate." And it is precisely for the uninitiate that Morley the essayist writes. The uninitiate are his public. Anyone with a remembrance of Lamb or Sterne could not fail to detect the shoddy in the fabric of Morley's essays. To the commuters of New York or Philadelphia, however, "Pipefuls," "Mince Pie," "Shandygaff" and the rest were doubtless a revelation of how appealing a supposedly dry form like the essay could be made.

Morley—and in this he is typical of the whole fraternity of first-person journalists—has capitalized what another age might call the indecencies of self-expression. A more graceful, less pachydermatously rollicking writer might interest and charm us with these personalia, and Morley, to do him justice, can occasionally do both, but time and again he breaks the spell, with some excruciatingly Morley-esque cacophony of taste or style. "All the rest of the year we are the plodding percheron of commerce, patiently tugging our wain; but on that morning there wambles back, for the nonce, the pang of Eden." This word "wambles," with its unfortunate suggestion of a fat man with diarrhœa, is a favorite with Morley. With "swink" and "kinsprit," it is one of the mainstays of his vocabulary.

For he is an Angloliterophile—a word he might have coined himself. His admiration of the great names of English literature is catholic, if not profound. And the writers he most admires are, though buoyant, good citizens—even the rowdiest quieted and canonized by the respectability of death. There is much great writing being done today, he thinks; and he tells us not to "worry too much

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about the Future of American Literature. It will come along all right, as any kind of art comes along, when we love things enough." These sentiments may throw some light on Morley's style. He evidently started writing with a great affection for words, but with rather feeble powers of discrimination. Any good old forthright English term captivated him at sight.

An ambidextrous writer usually betrays his fondnesses of style more clearly in his verse than in his prose, and Morley is no exception. His earlier verses are negligible; and why these juvenilia should ever have been collected in book form remains one of the secrets of the publishing business. And if we turn to the utterances of his maturer muse, we shall find, among a few good things, such astounding passages as this description of New York:

> Our Canaanitish Promissory Land
> Where strong men, yipping freedom, gyve themselves.

As he himself says in the same poem,

> No glib poetic generalities
> Will serve to annotate such unco scenes.

In his less serious verse, written with an evident smile, he is more at his ease, and puts us more at ours. Though his light verse never attains the level of the first-class, some of the stanzas on children are graceful; and though few of his "Translations from the Chinese" are memorable, he occasionally rises to a kind of ironic retort.

Of Morley's earlier books in prose, it is almost as hard to see the reason for the republication. Mr. A. E. Newton, it is true, regards Morley's "Parnassus on Wheels" as superior to Stevenson's "Travels with a Donkey"; but other men, too, have had their reason unsettled by living among books. No, here we remain easily unconvinced, as when Morley tries to persuade us that life in the suburbs may be of a simply Elizabethan gusto, or that the Brooklyn Bridge might be mistaken for a cathedral; and, as the Good Queen said, "we are not amused." But in "Where the Blue Begins" Morley first indicates that he has something a little different to say. The over-ebullience that gave his earlier writings the flavor of an advertising pamphlet de luxe is almost lacking here. Here, for the first time, he shows signs of a dawning uneasiness. It is still an uproariously beautiful world; but the observer himself is no longer uproarious: a pipe and a book and a good dinner are no longer the whole of life: he is definitely looking for something indefinite. Gissing is not the gay dog an earlier Morley would have made him. This book has been praised for its whimsical fantasy, and its author is widely regarded as a master of this delicate form. But is it fantasy? A dog keeping bachelor quarters on Long Island, adopting a family, managing a New York department-store, navigating a liner—often we forget that he is a dog at all. The story is faintly satirical, but the satire fails to develop; for the characters (who are all dogs) behave exactly as human beings; and once we have been told they are dogs, we soon get over it. Swift would have made them behave as dogs; and the satire, implicit and automatic, would have cut deeper and deeper. The truth of the matter is, the book is neither fantasy nor satire, but grotesque. The author's intention was apparently not clear to himself; if he had been sure of what he wanted to do, the result would not have been this unstable mixture of fairy-tale and sermon.

"Thunder on the Left" presents a scene both more complex and more interesting. Here the characters are all human beings; the fantasy, reduced to a whispering background, is almost successful and usually in key. In point of actual literary achievement, the contrast between this book and everything Mr. Morley had written before is amazing. You can hardly believe it is the same man. The skill with which he contrives the climate of this scene —a hot, breathless, thunderous, brooding atmosphere—is far beyond anything his previous books would have led one to expect.

The story begins and ends with the same childrens' birthday party, and in between we are carried twenty years forward, to the same house, but different characters. For all the children have grown up—all except one—and have forgotten how to be simple. The child who has not grown up wanders into the midst of the others like a visitor from a foreign star. Not understanding and not understood, he becomes a kind of fairy king around whom these others dance their earthly and unhappy revels. Peter Pan has left the nursery and come into the living-room, to spy upon the grown-up enemy. And, not feeling at home there, he finally escapes—almost in time. We are left with the impression that he had to abandon his shadow.

In this book Morley has at last fulfilled the implication of his title; and yet—and yet we close it with a feeling of curious disappointment, a sense, once again, of fumbled achievement. He has come closer to his goal this time than ever before; but he has not attained it. It is not quite a first-class book. Perhaps it is because, here again, he has not been perfectly sure of what he wanted to do. A novel is more than an impressionistic study; and Morley is not an impressionist; yet the one definite achievement of this novel is an impressionistic one. We feel and smell and taste the air, heavy with thunder. But the storm of events blows over, carrying with it its unrelieved and surcharged clouds, and its threat, instead of falling, is removed. If it were anybody else but Morley, we might think that this frustration was his object. But there is nothing so Russian in his temper: he would have resolved these perplexities if he could, but they were too much for him.

In the style of "Thunder on the Left" we see Morley at his best. His language is no longer exuberant and gauche, but deft and restrained. There are some passages of soliloquy whose delicately varied monotone is reminiscent of Joyce. Morley has always been a good descriptive writer, and in this book we get many such vignettes as this scene from the window of a speeding train:

> The telegraph poles came racing toward it, leaping up like tall threatening men; one by one they were struck down and fled away.

In the midst of so much good writing, it is with an added shock that occasionally we stumble on patches of the old, indiscriminate Morley: as when he speaks thus of a man's desire for a woman:

> How could any man with a full quota of biology help dream of mastering that cool, unroused detachment?

But such irritations hardly mar his performance as a whole. The book is a brilliant promise.

Well, we have had two stories from Mr. Morley's pen since "Thunder on the Left," and neither of them has even reminded us of that promise. Both are short, and both give off the sound of thorns once again crackling under a pot. "The Arrow" is a return to his besetting whimsy; and "Pleased to Meet You," an opera-bouffe tale of a post-

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war European republic, was perhaps suggested by "Prince Otto," but more nearly resembles a musical comedy plot by P. G. Wodehouse. No, it would not be safe to say that Mr. Morley has turned over a new leaf. As a first novel, "Thunder on the Left" would be extraordinary, but as the culminating work of a literary career—and so it must be regarded until Mr. Morley caps it with a better one—it will not entitle him to prolonged applause. On the other hand, "Thunder on the Left" is sufficient in itself to gainsay those critics who would assert that Christopher Morley's reputation has emerged from a pipe filled with very soft soap.

Will not some tocsin sound in his ear, and warn him to turn again? For if he persists in that broad way into which his feet too readily wander, it will not take a seer to foretell his end. He bears the seeds of his destruction within him: some fine day he will be carried off by an acute attack of whimsy, and if complications are needed, a mental system clotted with puns will surely supply them.

T. S. MATTHEWS.

Lost Boy

Robert Louis Stevenson, by G. K. Chesterton. Dodd, Mead and Company. $2.

THERE is a kind of temporal Limbo to which, when a famous author dies, he must sooner or later descend; posthumously, he begins all over again the dreary business of acquiring, or attempting to acquire, a reputation. Immediately after his death, there is likely to be a fanfare of eulogy. But this is succeeded, usually, by cat-calls from the gallery; and thereafter comes a lively alternation of choruses, some hostile and some friendly. The question of his permanence or impermanence, his importance or unimportance, is, according to the circumstances, languidly or vigorously debated. And eventually the patient ghost is permitted to fare forward to the slopes of Helicon, or downward to Lethe and a comfortable oblivion.

Robert Louis Stevenson is still in Limbo. His rather romantic career, the myth of his heroism (not unfounded), his brilliance, his oddity, his adventurous expedition (like Gauguin's, but for a different reason) to the South Sea Islands—all these factors, together with his books, contrived to magnify, while he was alive, his presence, and, after his death, his absence. There was an enormous curiosity about him, a queer public affection for him; it was, therefore, the most natural thing in the world that ultimately he should become a target for detraction.

Mr. Chesterton, in his new biography, undertakes the defense. In the strict sense, this is not a biography at all. It is rather a comment on preceding biographies, and particularly on those for which the motive has largely been the explosion of the Stevenson "myth." Mr. Chesterton mentions no names; but it is easy enough to recognize Mr. Steuart's book as the chief of these; and also to identify, in the earlier pages of the present work, a literary essay on Stevenson (referred to by Mr. Chesterton) as that by Mr. John Freeman, published a few years ago in the London Mercury. This essay has especially distressed Mr. Chesterton. It was the most formidable of recent attempts to see Stevenson afresh, and to find a place for him. Mr. Freeman felt that Stevenson had been very much overrated. He saw him, in fact, as a distinctly minor artist; as being, in a sense, a lineal descendant of Poe, in that his preoccupation as a story-teller was with the strange and remote and exciting rather than with the human; but as being inferior to Poe in depth and power. Mr. Chesterton will have none of this. He declines to see Stevenson as a maker of "wax flowers." In fact, he sees Stevenson as the antithesis of this: as a purveyor of the sharp, the sane, the healthy, the courageous; as being almost alone among the writers of the Dreary Eighties and Purple Nineties in seeking relief from the prevailing pessimism and spiritual bankruptcy *via* a return to the doctrine of courage, on the one hand—a sort of I-am-the-master-of-my-fate Henleyism—and a return to the doctrine of "beauty as revealed to the child" on the other. In short, he sees Stevenson as a kind of evangel of Hope and Will.

There is, of course, a good deal to be said for this view. And Mr. Chesterton says it admirably. He is sympathetic in his treatment of Stevenson—almost too sympathetic. He recognizes the forces which compelled his hero to move in the queer orbit which he found for himself; he admits cheerfully enough that Stevenson, in a sense, never grew up, and made of his literary work a kind of enforced return to boyhood; he eschews Freud, but none the less does sufficient justice to the psychological factors here at work. And when he comes to a critical appraisal of Stevenson, he says a great many excellent things. He acknowledges, as an undercurrent to the doctrine of sanity and courage, the "swaggering cult of fear." Of the poems, he admits that they are "more effective in their phraseology than in their poetry." And when he discusses the novels and short stories, he grants the thinness; "he is so very thrifty that his characters are almost thin." He attempts, it is true, to justify this on the ground that it was produced by Stevenson's "instinct for hard simplification"; an apology which does not quite convince. Stevenson himself was aware of his shortcomings in this regard. In a letter to Henry James he remarked: "How to get over, how to escape from, the besotted *particularity* of fiction. 'Roland approached the house: it had green doors and window blinds; and there was a scraper on the upper step' . . . To hell with Roland and the scraper!" . . . It is just exactly in Stevenson's horror of particularity that he failed of first-rateness as a novelist. In effect, he was a minor poet who attempted, and with considerable success, to become a writer of fiction. He could manage the salient detail, the one sharp image, the brilliant superficial description of a character or scene, the easy transitions and technical arrangements of material; but when it came to the purely cumulative factor in fiction, the slow amassing of overwhelming evidence, the patient accretion of circumstance which gradually gives to a character his real body and psychological force, he was just as conspicuously a failure. None of his people is anything but a vivid pictorial image; we see them for a flash, and they are gone. We do not know them, as we know Anna Karenina, or Milly Theale.

Mr. Chesterton does not ignore this feature of Stevenson's work: but he is perhaps a little inclined to minimize its importance. Stevenson was an admirable writer of tales: and in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" he took, just once, a plunge into a darker world. Had he gone on in that direction—had he worked this particular mine—we should perhaps now be saying other things of him. Mr. Chesterton somewhat deplores this particular vein. It smells, to him, of escaping gas; very much as D'Annunzio's work smelt, to Henry James, of bad drains. But it was more than that: it was a real sounding of psychological mystery. As Stevenson remarked in a letter: "The gnome is interesting, I think, and he came out of a deep mine, where he guards the fountain of tears. It is not always the time to rejoice."

CONRAD AIKEN.

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Sandburg's Reliques

The American Song Bag, by Carl Sandburg. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 495 pages. $7.50.

THIS is the supreme American song-collection. I believe it is the finest that has sprung from any English-speaking people, because no other that I know, of anything approaching its noble scope, has had the benefit of Sandburg's love and knowledge of songs in their dual aspect, as literature, and as things to be sung. I cannot praise all the work of the corps of musicians who have written his piano accompaniments. It seems to me that Mr. Leo Sowerby, alone among these, has uniformly produced settings of distinction and beauty without sacrificing the defenseless tunes themselves. But with Mr. Sandburg's part in this Bible of song-lore I can find no fault that does not sink into insignificance in the face of his achievement.

It requires a wrench to pass by the first song in the book, "He's Gone Away," a major discovery as folk-verse and as tune. It is a Southern mountain song of ineffable pathos, in which homely local references and dialect are interwoven with such conceptions, common to numberless ancient English ballads, as the question-and-answer series commencing:

> Oh, who will tie your shoes?
> And who will glove your hands?
> And who will kiss your ruby lips when I am gone?

The same song contains a noteworthy Shelleyan parallel:

> . . . Where them white doves are flyin'
> From bough to bough, and a-matin' with their mates,
> *So why not me with mine?*

The air of the song is another blend, notably free in form and varied in its repetitions, its rhythms and accents negroid, and equal, in their delicacy and grace, to those of the great spiritual "Lonesome Valley" in "Slave Songs of the United States."

It is in the English folk-songs, in the group of Irish immigrants under the heading "The Ould Sod," and in others without a pronounced American or Aframerican musical flavor, that Sandburg's arrangers seem most at home, and, accordingly, at their considerable best. I cite a few examples: "Waillie" ("When cockle shells are silver bells"). An exquisite lullaby, "*Sh*-Ta Ra-Da Dey," whose single theme of the little one gets for working on the boulevard recalls the "wild plums are only a penny a pound" of a Hindu slumber-song in one of Kipling's stories. Another Irish song, so short it may be quoted in full:

> 'Twas in the month of August, or the middle of July,
> One evening I went walking, a fair maiden I did spy;
> She was mournin' for her true love, who was in Amerikee—
> Agh, divil a word I said to her, and she said the same to me.

—and "The Lover's Lament," mysterious and melancholy; "Adelita," a Mexican song; "By'm By," a fragment of eastern sky with new stars; "The Colorado Trail."

There are, on the other hand, what I regard as flagrant mistreatments of certain Negro themes such as "Dis Mornin'," "Frankie and Albert" (whose arrangement might have been inspired by Grieg's "Klokkeklang"), and "My Old Hammah." The latter is a work song, used by wielders of nine-pound hammers. The arranger notes that "the hammer stroke motive should quite predominate." Four such strokes, staccato, are indicated in each measure. Hammer stroke? Tack-hammer. Again, with songs that every American knows, that fill the college song-books, the accompaniments are frequently of a preciosity that would kill a budding song-session as efficiently as a double alarm from next door. Yet these musicians have atoned for all when they have found congenial material, or for the time have forgotten their harmonic erudition.

Sandburg's headnotes are small miracles of memory and recognition, but he has wisely chosen more songs as against more history. I offer a few annotations for his margins. With his magnificent "boll weevil" songs, compare Ma Rainey's Paramount record of "Bo-Weevil Blues." "John Henry" is an exceptionally fine version, with the laments of the hero's women in red, brown, etc. I miss, however, John Henry's infant prophecies, found in "Negro Workaday Songs." "Give Me Three Grains of Corn, Mother" had an author, Mrs. A. M. Edmond. A book should be written about the grand "Wizard Oil," and the medicine show that produced it. The fell ballad-tragedy "Little Scotchee" (or "Young Hunting") here omits a striking verse in which the murderess wishes for a bow and arrow to kill the taunting bird. The note to "Lord Lovell," on the oddly cheerful tunes that go with mortuary ballads, applies to a whole catalogue of such modern hill-billy necrology as "The Death of Floyd Collins," for which see Vernon Dalhart's phonograph records. In "Turkey in the Straw" is a shocking and ruinous omission of two bars; on the other hand, in "Got Dem Blues," the fifth measure should come out. And some of the songs here called "blues" are so only in the sense in which "Cuckoo Waltz" (in two-four time) is a waltz. From this book and Spaeth's "Read 'Em and Weep" together one may learn and learn about the printable portion of "Frankie and Johnny." Someone should collect a thousand such characteristic descriptions as one finds in "Liza Jane," e. g.: "Her mouth is like an old fireplace with the ashes all raked out." It was one of these old songs, I believe, that gave the world the classic simile "eyes like holes burnt in a blanket." The rare slave-day worksong "Heave Away" should not be skipped, though it has no accompaniment. "The Ship that Never Returned" is the basis, not of the printed "Prisoner's Song," but of "The Wreck of the Southern Old '97." Sowerby's setting of the great cocaine dream "Willy the Weeper" is probably the finest extant. There is a version of that meat-axe *memento mori* "The Hearse Song," with a ghastly, endless, major, air . . . but "The American Song Bag," like any great work, is inexhaustible, and an end must be made somewhere.

ABBE NILES.

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